HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

EXPLORING CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE MUSLIM WORLD

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Bernard Patry, M.P.
Chair

March 2004

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104-07484/

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has the honour to present its

FIRST REPORT

In accordance with its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), your committee has undertaken a study of relations with countries of the Muslim world and has agreed to report the following:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAIR'S FOREWORD xi

PREFACE xiii

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY xxvii

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS xxiii

PART I: CONTENDING WITH THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT 1

The Complexities of "Islam" and of "Islamism" as Political Ideology 2

The Complex Contours and Dynamics of the "Muslim World" 6

From a "Clash" to a "Dialogue" of Civilizations 9

The Aftermath of September 11, 2001 and the "War on Terrorism" 11

The Spread of Islam and Liberal-Democratic Values 14

Human Rights Challenges, Equality for Women and for Minorities 18

Looking Ahead 21

PART II: DEVELOPING THE ELEMENTS OF A CONSTRUCTIVE CANADIAN APPROACH 23

The Changing International and Domestic Environments 23

The Implications of Diasporas and Foreign Policy 24

Learning From European Experiences 25

Engaging Canadian Muslims 28

Elements of a Long-Term Approach 31

Education and Dialogue 31

Canadian Values and Culture 34

Supporting Civil Society and Democratization 35

Addressing Terrorism and Security 36

Addressing Human Rights 38

Emphasizing the Rights of Women and Minorities 38

Protecting Canadians and Strengthening Diplomatic Advocacy 40

Public Diplomacy and Media 41

Strengthening Foreign Policy Instruments 42

PART III: CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH MUSLIM COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN NORTH AFRICA ... 47

Regional Overview ... 47

The Way Forward ... 54

Turkey ... 55

Witness Views in Turkey ... 58

Directions for Canadian Policy ... 61

Iran ... 63

Witness Views in Iran ... 66

The Case of Zahra Kazemi and Human Rights in Iran ... 70

Directions for Canadian Policy ... 72

Saudi Arabia ... 75

Witness Views in Saudi Arabia ... 80

The Case of William Sampson and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia ... 86

Directions for Canadian Policy ... 88

Egypt ... 89

Witness Views in Egypt ... 91

Directions for Canadian Policy ... 100

The Middle East Peace Process, Israel and Palestine ... 102

Brief Background ... 103

Witness Views in Ottawa Hearings ... 106

Witness Views in the Middle East ... 109

Directions for Canadian Policy ... 115

Jordan ... 118

Witness Views in Jordan ... 120

Directions for Canadian Policy ... 124

Morocco ... 125

Monarchy and Reform ... 126

Addressing Political and Social Challenges ... 127

Witnesses Views in Morocco ... 130

Directions for Canadian Policy 132

PART IV: CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA 135

Understanding the Role of Islam in Asia 137

South Asia: Regional Overview 138

Achieving Security 139

Pursuing Development and Democratization 143

Strengthening Canada's Role 145

Pakistan 146

The Role of Islam in Pakistan 149

Democratization and Good Governance 150

Witness Views in Pakistan 153

Directions for Canadian Policy 154

India 155

Re-engaging with India 155

Preserving the Secular Model 156

Addressing Development Challenges 158

Witness Views in India 159

Directions for Canadian Policy 162

Relations with Countries in Southeast Asia 162

Regional Overview 163

Islam in Southeast Asia 165

Directions for Canadian Policy 166

Indonesia 167

Consolidating Democracy 168

Islam and Education 171

Achieving Security 173

Witnesses Views in Indonesia 174

Directions for Canadian Policy 177

Malaysia 179

A Multi-ethnic Democracy 180

Islamisation and Mahathir's Legacy 182

Witnesses Views in Malaysia 185

Directions For Canadian Policy 189

APPENDIX I: PROFILE OF THE "MUSLIM WORLD" BY REGION AND COUNTRY 191

APPENDIX II: LIST OF WITNESSES 205

APPENDIX III: LIST OF BRIEFS 221

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE 223

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS 225

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Questions about the relationship between Islam and the West have multiplied in recent years, and intensified in the two and one-half years since the terrible events of September 11, 2001. As the Committee was deciding to undertake a study of Canada's relations with the countries of the Muslim world early in 2003, Canadian and international attention was dominated by the beginning of the war in Iraq. Our exploration has taken place during a tense, testing period in international relations and world politics.

The Committee's public hearings in Canada and meetings in other countries have confirmed the complex nature of such an undertaking, given the need to avoid both stereotypes in analysis and simplistic "one size fits all" answers and recommendations. I believe it also shows that Members of Parliament from all political parties can come together to educate themselves about a complicated as well as challenging subject. We were able to reach consensus across party differences on solid recommendations that we believe will strengthen Canada's overall foreign policy in this important area.

As the report makes clear, viewing relations between Muslim majority and Western countries through the lens of a "clash of civilizations" is both unhelpful and misleading. The same observation applies to perceptions that Islam is incompatible with certain liberal-democratic precepts that include equal rights for women and for religious minorities. Moreover, it is clear that the vast majority of the world's Muslims condemn international terrorist violence, and that we must increase our shared cooperation against it.

In the pages that follow, the Committee attempts to establish a stronger framework for constructive Canadian policies toward the countries of the Muslim world in general, while also addressing relations with the specific countries we visited. We have made our best effort on what we fully recognize is an immensely complicated evolving agenda.

A study and report of this magnitude can only be carried out with the hard work and cooperation of all Committee members to whom I express my thanks. The Committee has also been very fortunate in the support given to it by dozens of public servants in Ottawa — particularly from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency — and particularly in the Canadian missions in the many countries we visited. These really are the people that represent Canada to the world, and they make us proud as they do so.

Last but not least, the Committee is fortunate in this and all our work to have the support of extremely capable staff. Appreciation is especially due to our Clerk, Stephen Knowles, assisted by Elizabeth Kingston and the support team of Diane Lafleur, Diane Lefebvre and Eveline Shaw from the Committee's Directorate of the House of Commons. The Committee is also grateful for the long hours devoted to the study and the report's preparation by its principal research staff from the Parliamentary Research Branch of the Library of Parliament, notably Dr. Gerald Schmitz and James Lee, with additional assistance by Michael Dewing. The production and editorial services provided by the Publications Services of the House of Commons and the dedication of the Translation Bureau were also instrumental and much appreciated.

It has been an exemplary collaboration yielding an impressive result that I am confident will make a valuable contribution to the development of Canadian foreign policy for years to come.

Bernard Patry
Chair

PREFACE

In the spring of 2003 the Committee began a study[1] of issues generating vigorous international debate and increasingly affecting Canadian foreign policy, yet so far little examined from a Canadian perspective. The role of religion in politics, and specifically of religious factors in international politics, is a sensitive subject that has been made even more controversial as well as problematic by the connection of religious motivations to extreme manifestations of political violence.[2] In particular, terrorism carried out in the name of Islam, as in the dramatic events of September 11, 2001, galvanized attention on the world of Islam in two ways: first, around the relations of Western states with those having Muslim majorities or large Muslim populations; second, around relations with growing Muslim minorities and diaspora communities within most Western countries. In both cases, Muslims may feel themselves to be unfairly targeted by allegations or actions perceived as "anti-Muslim". More broadly, there is a shared concern worldwide about stereotypes of Islam and of Muslims being propagated that polarize and provoke conflicts. Many argue that what is needed instead are approaches to foster better understanding, addressing the causes behind the resort to violence and the sources of its appeal in order to eliminate or at least mitigate further ill effects on domestic and international relations.

This study is an exploratory one in that it aims to deepen a basic understanding of how best Canada can relate to countries in what has been loosely termed the "Muslim world"[3] and to draw out some implications for the conduct of future Canadian foreign policy. To that end, the Committee held a series of panels with officials, experts and non-governmental spokespersons during April to June and September to November 2003. Representatives of the Montreal-based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development also testified in February 2004. In addition, in the fall of 2003, His Excellency Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States appeared before the Committee, and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan addressed Canadian parliamentarians at a meeting presided over by Committee Chair Bernard Patry.

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[1] Pursuant to a motion adopted on February 6, 2003 that the Committee examine Canada's relations with countries of the Muslim world.

[2] The re-emergence of religion as an important factor in international relations is a striking phenomenon of recent years. As the introduction to a symposium on the subject observes: "Rarely in modern times has religion's role in international affairs been discussed with the sense of urgency that it is today." ("Beyond beliefs: Religion", *Harvard International Review*, xxv:4, Winter 2004, p. 32. See also Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, eds., *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003; Mary Ann Tétrault and Robert Denemark, eds., *Gods, Guns, and Globalization: Religious Radicalism and International Political Economy*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, forthcoming June 2004.) A further illustration is the program of the International Studies Association convention held in Montreal in March 2004 (under the theme "Hegemony and Its Discontents") listing nearly a dozen panels and over 60 papers that addressed religious factors in some form, predominantly with reference to Islam.

[3] We recognize the caveats on using this term as a generalization; however, it serves as a useful shorthand and starting point to indicate the geopolitical importance of the world's over 1.4 billion followers of Islam. See Appendix I for a profile of Muslim populations by region and country.

Beyond those hearings in Canada, the Committee pursued its inquiry in other countries. In May 2003, the Committee undertook an initial study trip to New York, London, Paris, and Morocco. In October 2003, the Committee divided into several groups in order to be able to meet with a wide range of interlocutors (including high-level government officials, parliamentarians, academics, journalists, members of NGOs) in the Middle East and in South and Southeast Asia, specifically: Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Egypt, Pakistan, India, Malaysia and Indonesia.

As extensive as the Committee's meetings were, we were obviously able to cover only a part of the Muslim world, and then only briefly. This report makes no claim to comprehensiveness, either in terms of the vast subject of the role of Islam in the modern world or in regard to the many countries with significant Muslim populations. Instead, what we focus on are some of the most salient elements emerging from our discussions, such as the appropriate response of Western governments to Islamist political extremism and the relationship of Islam to liberal democracy, that have a direct bearing on relations among states and Canadian foreign policy options. We also comment specifically on the regions and countries visited, and on several cases that have especially tested Canadian diplomacy in its relations with important Muslim countries.

The Committee's purpose is to contribute to a process of both educating and advancing Canadian policy towards countries in the Muslim world, building on a widespread positive perception of Canada abroad as an open, tolerant and pluralistic society. We believe that Canada has an important opportunity to make a constructive difference. That requires coming to terms with a very challenging and contested international context, one that witnesses repeatedly cautioned us not to oversimplify. In addition, they urged that Canada maintain an independence of policy analysis and action.

Part I of the report begins by setting out some of those key larger contextual issues that bear on the development of any effective Canadian policy. Part II carries that forward to consider the elements of a constructive approach reflecting Canadian interests and values.

The remaining parts of the report consider Canada's relations with those regions and countries visited by Committee members in light of the broad themes outlined in Parts I and II. The focus is on the potential of those relations to further Canada's overall relationship with the Muslim world within bilateral as well as multilateral contexts.

The Committee is conscious that we have only begun to scratch the surface with this study and that we cannot offer definitive conclusions or prescriptions. Nevertheless, we think that continuing to make the effort to understand the complex phenomena and forces that are at play is enormously important to Canadians' security, well-being and long-term interest in a more peaceful, just and democratic world for all.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The dynamic complexity and diversity of the Muslim world are such that a report of this nature necessarily carries several caveats. The Committee's examination of Canada's relations refers to "countries of the Muslim world" because that is a widely used and understood shorthand for describing the broad geopolitical expanse of the world's approximately 1.4 billion Muslims. It includes countries such as India; not a "Muslim country," but with a minority Muslim population that is several times larger than the largest Arab-Muslim country in the Middle East. It also includes the growing Muslim diasporas in countries of the West, including Canada.

As the report's preface underlines, the Committee's study is exploratory and makes no claims to comprehensive coverage or definitive prescriptions. For example, while the Committee held meetings in both Asia, home to the majority of the world's Muslims, as well as the Middle East and North Africa, our inquiry did not delve into the role of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa. We did not discuss theological matters beyond their potential impact on international politics and foreign policy. In the regions and countries visited, our observations are also necessarily limited; moreover, these will need to be viewed and reviewed in the light of evolving circumstances.

Given the range and variability of the factors involved, the Committee's first recommendations to the Government of Canada are to ensure that, in order to give the Muslim world the attention it deserves, Canadian policymakers have the appropriate capacities both to analyze ongoing relevant developments and to act effectively in the best interests of Canadians.

Beyond the specific regional and country situations addressed in the report, a number of more general findings emerged from the Committee's study and reflections as a whole. The following summary points highlight those overall conclusions. In the Committee's view, these are key elements to be taken into account in the development of a constructive, forward-looking Canadian foreign policy capable of strengthening relations with the countries of the Muslim world.

Recognizing Islam's complex world of differences

While all Muslims belong to a faith community of followers of Islam (the "ummah") that is global in extent, it is important to avoid the dangers of stereotyping, over-generalizations and over-simplifications that will mislead policy. The report observes that the world of Islam is anything but monolithic. On the contrary, it is extremely heterogeneous and sometimes marked by sharp internal divisions between different religious branches, schools of thought, legal interpretations, and socio-cultural practices. Even the limited selection of countries that the Committee visited exhibited enormous differences in comparison with each other; there can also be major differences in approaches to Islam within these countries. That does not mean there are no common points of reference or objectives to be pursued across regions and countries. Promoting pluralistic forms of democracy that respect human rights values is one such shared objective. It does mean that foreign policy must be sensitive to highly varied and changing circumstances or risk being inappropriate, ineffective or both. In sum, Canada's relations with the Muslim world cannot follow a static, "one-size-fits-all" blueprint. They must be adaptable to new information and tailored to the specific requirements of diverse, continuously evolving country situations.

Advancing knowledge of Islam and understanding its political impacts

While Muslims are a growing minority in most Western countries, including Canada, these countries still have a fairly low level of general knowledge about Islam and its influence around the world. Of course, a great deal of media and public attention has been given to violent political manifestations associated with Islam, especially suicide terrorism; however, this negative spotlight focuses on only one element of a much more complicated reality and may also distort that reality. Understanding Islamic influences on government and state policies, on social and economic relations, cultural norms, individual and group rights, and the like, necessarily goes far beyond the question of the extreme, violent-minority edges of Islamist activity. Beyond probing the causes of such violence, a deeper appreciation is needed of the increasing mainstream political force of Islam. The report calls for increased generation and communication of such knowledge. An important way of improving our knowledge base will be to expand opportunities to listen to, and learn from, moderate Muslim voices in Canada and abroad.

Overcoming legacies of subjugation, humiliation and fear

The report acknowledges that the burdens of both history and recent tragic events weigh heavily on many Muslim countries and communities. The borders and regimes created by imperialism, colonialism and great-power interventions have frequently not respected the rights of local peoples. At times they have contributed to protracted deadly conflicts — as notably in the cauldron of the Middle East in regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict that continues to be a prime source of grievances and tensions in relations between the Muslim world and the West. Feelings of isolation and humiliation among Muslim populations have been exacerbated by what many view as the unfair targeting of Islam for the terrorist outrages of recent years. Political issues become intertwined with those of religious identity. A profound sense of victimization arises out of a climate of fear and mistrust. Working to overcome that and to move from misunderstandings to building confidence through mutual respect — rejecting any "clash of civilizations" path — must be an important consideration in any constructive strategy for further engaging with the Muslim world.

Addressing the challenges of demography and education

The report points to the youthfulness of the populations of many Muslim countries, and to the critical role that education will play in determining the progress of Muslim societies. The large number of new jobs required to accommodate entrants into the labour forces of these countries highlights the importance of economic development and social investment if instability and declining living standards are to be avoided. Yet as the UN's *Arab Human Development Report* points out in an assessment that has broader application — economic development prospects are integrally linked to addressing key societal deficits of democratic rights and freedoms, gender equality, education and knowledge. In many Muslim countries, educational challenges are not only of a secular nature; they may also involve a need to reform religious education, especially under circumstances in which religious schools (*madrassas*) are a primary affordable option for low-income families. Future relations may depend on the ability of Muslim-country governments to provide basic public education that promotes tolerance and the accommodation of differences. Those relations can also be enhanced through the promotion of student, academic and other educational exchanges between Canada and Muslim countries.

Closing the democratic gap

The report strongly affirms the compatibility of Islam with democracy and respect for human rights. At the same time, it frankly documents the great gulf that continues to exist between the democratic aspirations of Muslim majorities and the repressive authoritarian realities under which many Muslims live. Overall, the record is mixed. There are large Muslim populations that do enjoy democratic government; Indonesia has the world's biggest Muslim majority, India the biggest Muslim minority — both are democracies. Significant progress is being made under Turkey's moderately Islamist government. Yet so far only 8 of 46 Muslim-majority countries are electoral democracies. The Arab-Muslim world has been described as a "democracy-free zone" that modern waves of democratization have left behind. A chasm, not just a gap, separates ruling elites from the grassroots. Recent rigged elections in Iran have dashed hopes for reform in that country. The report argues that the policies of Canada and other Western countries must be clear and consistent in signalling support for democratic changes within a variety of Muslim contexts.

Improving human rights performance and the status of women

The report also underlines that the nature and quality of democratic change in Muslim countries must address the equality of human rights for all. It is critically important in this regard to distinguish between the teachings of Islam and traditional socio-cultural practices that may be highly discriminatory, notably towards women. Iranian human rights activist Shirin Ebadi, winner of the 2003 Nobel peace prize and the first Muslim woman to be so honoured, is among many who argue that Islam's tenets are not in conflict with fundamental international human rights standards. Advancing the rights of women should therefore be an explicit element of Canadian policy in building relations with Muslim countries.

Protecting the rights of minorities, other vulnerable groups and individuals

Among the human rights challenges addressed in the report are those facing both Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries and religious, ethno-cultural, and other minorities in Muslim countries, especially vulnerable minorities that have historically suffered from systemic discrimination. In a number of these countries, there are also severe restrictions on basic freedoms; in some, gross human rights violations are still commonplace. Cooperation is needed among Muslims and non-Muslims in working to entrench the rule of law and create conditions of democratic pluralism within which all individuals and groups can enjoy equal rights and equal protection of the law. Minority rights should be of explicit concern to Canada in relations with Muslim countries. Moreover, beyond individual high-profile cases of human rights abuses affecting Canadian citizens, Canadian policy should speak out forcefully in defence of human rights in the Muslim world whenever and wherever serious abuses occur.

Encouraging and supporting democratic and human rights reforms

In making a strong case for promoting democratic and human rights reforms throughout the Muslim world, the report is careful to emphasize that this is *not* an agenda for the export or external imposition of "our model". The kind of encouragement and support that is required derives from a common obligation to implement internationally recognized standards of rights and should involve working as closely as possible with other governments and civil-society organizations. At the same time, Canada's experience in accommodating multicultural differences and integrating immigrants from diverse backgrounds may be valuable to others facing democratization and human rights challenges, a point supported by American expert on Islamic democracy Noah Feldman. A considered Canadian approach to promoting democratic and human rights reforms can make a distinctive contribution when joined to the efforts of those working for such reforms within Muslim countries.

Promoting shared learning, partnership, and dialogue

The report also emphasizes that there is much to be learned from the experiences of others, including learning from mistakes and what to avoid in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. No country has all the answers. Partnerships are therefore needed at the international level involving multilateral organizations, governments, non-governmental actors and civil-society groups. Inter-cultural and inter-faith activities that contribute to fruitful dialogues among and within civilizations should be supported.

Including Canadian Muslims and fostering wider public engagement

The internal resources of Canadian society, notably the ideas and skills of Canada's growing Muslim communities, should be another important source of learning and building up knowledge capacities. The report observes that many Canadian Muslims want to have a larger voice in foreign policy development. Their talents could also be extremely valuable in strengthening Canada's diplomatic capabilities to advance relations with key regions and countries of the Muslim world. In addition, it is important that the wider Canadian public become more knowledgeably engaged in issues involving Canada's relations with the Muslim world. The report calls on the Government to encourage that participation, specifically in the process of the promised international policy review.

Strengthening Canada's presence and diplomatic effectiveness in the Muslim world

A message repeatedly reinforced by Committee testimony both here and in other countries was that Canada should strive for a more visible and effective presence in the Muslim world. Many witnesses argued that Canada already has the advantages of being generally well perceived and well received in Muslim countries, though often not well enough known. Canada is most appreciated for its example of being a welcoming pluralistic society that is committed to multilateralism and able to take independent international stands while maintaining close ties as neighbour to the world's greatest power. Canada was urged to play a more active, influential role in relations with Muslim countries, and to project a stronger identity. The report recommends possible measures for doing so including: increased regional/country representation as necessary; Canadian public diplomacy, cultural, educational and other knowledge-based initiatives and exchanges; and collaborative ventures with the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGO) partners.

Enhancing Canadian foreign policy capabilities in a strategic approach to the Muslim world

Finally, the report reiterates a point emphasized by previous Committee reports: namely, that policy ideas such as the ones outlined above, however well founded and intentioned, will have little effect unless they are matched with the capacities and resources required to implement them. The report's first recommendation that the Government adopt a forward-looking, strategic approach to relations with the Muslim world is followed up by further operational recommendations, notably to ensure adequate support for enhanced linguistic and analysis capabilities. Without such foreign policy instruments, the goals of stronger relations with countries of the Muslim world will remain more rhetorical than real. Citing European examples, the report also recommends that the Government consider establishing a mechanism within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to coordinate dialogue activities with the countries of the Muslim world.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PART I: CONTENDING WITH THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Government of Canada should explicitly recognize relations with the countries of the Muslim world as an important area of foreign policy attention and strategic planning. In addition, the Government should use the forthcoming international policy review as a means to deepen Canadian public engagement on issues of foreign policy development involving Muslim communities in Canada and relations with Muslim countries. ..p. 22

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Government of Canada should strengthen the analytical and diplomatic capacities required to be effective in enhancing Canada's relations with the countries of the Muslim world. ..... p. 22

PART II: DEVELOPING THE ELEMENTS OF A CONSTRUCTIVE CANADIAN APPROACH

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Government of Canada must ensure a proper understanding of the complexities of the diverse countries of the Muslim world and develop a constructive long-term approach toward them. In particular, the Committee is convinced that there cannot be genuine democratic progress without a serious process of increasing equality for women — economic, social, and political equality — in law and in practice.

As part of this constructive approach, the Government should:

- ensure full consultation with a broad range of groups, including Muslim groups, in the ongoing development of its foreign policy;

- place greater emphasis on generating and communicating knowledge at home and abroad; support secular education abroad which upholds human rights and individual freedoms; and, noting the example of McGill University's successful program in Indonesia, in cooperation with the provinces as necessary, encourage other Canadian educational institutions to establish similar programs in Muslim countries;

- continue to support intercultural and interfaith dialogue;

- in cooperation with the provinces as necessary, expand student and other exchange programs;

- emphasize values such as pluralism and multiculturalism, and encourage the adoption of universal human rights values and freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion, association, enterprise and ownership of property;

- continue to support civil society and democratization throughout the Muslim world and elsewhere;

- continue to strongly condemn all human rights abuses;

- place even greater emphasis on the need for gender equality and women's rights;

- speak out strongly in defence of minority rights, including minority religious communities, and encourage their full participation in the national affairs of their countries;

- pursue a more aggressive strategy for the protection of Canadians detained abroad;

- strongly consider supporting the idea of establishing a Canadian news service televised by satellite; and

- ensure adequate resources for enhanced linguistic and analysis capabilities within the Canadian government, and consider the establishment of a mechanism within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to coordinate dialogue activities with the countries of the Muslim world. .... p. 43

PART III: CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH MUSLIM COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

TURKEY

RECOMMENDATION 4

Canada should encourage the Government of Turkey to be a voice of democracy and moderation within the Muslim world and to continue to implement democratic and human rights reforms, including respecting the rights of its Kurdish minority, in compliance with Turkey's international obligations and aspirations to join the European Union. .... p. 62

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Government of Canada should explore ways to facilitate further contacts with Turkey both at the official level and through private sector, civil society, educational and cultural connections. Consideration should be given to inviting Prime Minister Recep Erdogan to visit Canada and to address Parliament on, among other matters, strengthening ties with countries of the Muslim world. .... p. 62

IRAN

RECOMMENDATION 6

Canada should strongly protest the February 2004 electoral process that disqualified serving parliamentarians and appeal to Iran to conduct open and fair democratic elections. Canada should also continue to work closely with other countries in multilateral forums, and with democratic forces inside Iran, including where still possible through parliamentary and political channels, to press for improvements in Iran's human rights performance. .... p. 74

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Government of Canada should vigorously continue its efforts to achieve a full accounting from the Government of Iran for the illegal detention, torture and murder of Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi, and should pursue all avenues of redress that will result in a just and satisfactory resolution. .... p. 74

RECOMMENDATION 8

Canada should at the same time explore ways to increase constructive contacts with Iranian civil society through educational, cultural and other exchanges, private sector and NGO links. .... p. 74

RECOMMENDATION 9

Canada should continue to put pressure on Iran to abide fully by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and specifically, to implement the undertakings made to the International Atomic Energy Agency following Iran's admission of non-compliance in October 2003. .... p. 74

SAUDI ARABIA

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Government of Canada should urge Saudi Arabia to address the sources of terrorism and religious extremism within its borders, and offer Canada's cooperation in common efforts to combat such terrorism and extremism. The Government should also actively pursue opportunities to promote dialogue and to build ties with Saudi Arabia. In particular, Canada should:

- Strongly encourage changes in the direction of human rights, democratic, and educational reforms as being in Saudi Arabia's interest;
- Explore increased intellectual, educational and cultural as well as political exchanges. .... p. 88

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Government of Canada should at the same time continue to impress upon the Government of Saudi Arabia the need for it to conduct a full investigation of the allegations of miscarriage of justice and torture made by Canadian citizen William Sampson, and the need for Saudi Arabia to comply fully with its international human rights obligations. Until justice is done, and seen to be done, bilateral relations will not be able to develop as constructively as we believe is in the mutual interest of both countries. .... p. 88

EGYPT

RECOMMENDATION 12

In engaging the Government of Egypt in political dialogue, Canada should consistently encourage Egypt to institute democratic reforms and to respect basic standards of internationally recognized human rights, including in the necessary common efforts to curb political violence and religious extremism. Such efforts should also address underlying conditions of poverty and social exclusion. .... p. 101

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Government of Canada should use the 50th anniversary in 2004 of the establishment of bilateral relations with Egypt to significantly upgrade Canada's capacity to carry out educational and cultural cooperation activities and exchanges within Egypt and benefiting the wider Arab region. In particular, the Canadian government in cooperation with the provinces should strongly support the Al-Ahram Canadian University project and should consider the feasibility of establishing a Canadian Cultural Centre in Cairo. .... p. 102

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Government should ensure that Canadian development assistance to Egypt is concentrated in people-centred projects, working with independent NGOs wherever possible. Canada should also work with the private sector to advance responsible investment and trade that benefits both countries. .... p. 102

THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

RECOMMENDATION 15

In order to encourage all possibilities for a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Government of Canada should consider how Canada can play a stronger role in supporting:

- good governance, social development and educational efforts, working with pro-democracy partners in the region;
- conflict resolution, community dialogue and confidence-building measures that strengthen civil society;
- peacebuilding initiatives, including facilitating, sponsoring and hosting peace activities in the region, in addition to playing a more active role in advancing the established Roadmap process for political negotiations. .... p. 117

RECOMMENDATION 16

Canada should ensure that its humanitarian and development assistance activities in the Palestinian territories make the maximum contribution to meeting human needs priorities while promoting peaceful and pluralistic solutions to the conflict. .... p. 117

RECOMMENDATION 17

Canada should continue to impress upon Israeli and Palestinian authorities their responsibilities to respect international human rights obligations and their mutual interest in ending all violence, particularly terrorist violence targeting innocent civilians, and pursuing peace negotiations in good faith. .... p. 118

RECOMMENDATION 18

The longer term role and capabilities of Canadian diplomatic, defence, and development assistance resources in advancing the Middle East peace process should be re-assessed in the context of the forthcoming review of Canada's international policies announced by the Government in February 2004. .... p. 118

JORDAN

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Government of Canada should strongly encourage the Government of Jordan to continue along a path of liberalizing socio-economic, democratic, good governance and human rights reforms. Canada should also pursue cooperation with Jordan on regional peace and democracy-building objectives, including cultivating channels for interfaith dialogue and for political dialogue at both official and civil-society levels. .... p. 125

MOROCCO

RECOMMENDATION 20

Canada should continue to encourage and provide support to the Government of Morocco as it pursues its broad program of reform. In particular, Canada should increase assistance in the area of education, and continue assistance for democratization, governance reform and strengthening civil society. .... p. 133

PART IV: CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

RECOMMENDATION 21

Given the importance of the states of Central Asia and the developments that have taken place there since September 2001, the Government of Canada should revisit the recommendations contained in the Committee's 2001 report *Advancing Canadian Foreign Policy Objectives in the South Caucasus and Central Asia* in the context of reviewing its relations with the countries of the Muslim world. .... p. 136

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Government of Canada should encourage India and Pakistan to continue their composite talks, and should stand ready with the rest of the international community to contribute to the resolution of long-standing disputes, particularly that over Kashmir, as appropriate. .... p. 143

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Government of Canada should continue to urge the governments of Pakistan and India to work together to reduce the risk of nuclear escalation in South Asia and, given recent revelations, redouble their efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. .... p. 143

PAKISTAN

RECOMMENDATION 24

The Government of Canada should continue to insist on the restoration and strengthening of democracy in Pakistan, as well as greater respect for human rights and faster action on reducing poverty and meeting other development challenges, and should continue to pursue these goals through a policy of constructive engagement. .... p. 155

RECOMMENDATION 25

Given the critical importance of increasing access to adequate and inclusive education in Pakistan, the Government of Canada should apply stringent conditions to ensure that its debt for education swap results in tangible progress toward this goal; increase scholarships and other forms of academic exchanges with that country; and encourage the Government of Pakistan to proceed with its commitment to register all *madrassas* and regulate their curricula. .... p. 155

INDIA

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Government of Canada should continue to pursue its current policy of re-engagement with India, and, where possible, support Indian government efforts to provide adequate education for the most disadvantaged groups in society. Canada should also support efforts to decrease intercommunal tensions. .... p. 162

INDONESIA

RECOMMENDATION 27

Recognizing the recent democratic progress made by Indonesia, notably in embracing pluralism, as well as its potential as a model for the rest of the Muslim world, the Government of Canada should continue to both encourage and assist the Government of Indonesia in emphasizing pluralism as a key element of its democracy. .... p. 178

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Government of Canada should continue to strengthen its bilateral cooperation with Indonesia in the areas of democracy and governance; support civil society groups that work to reduce ethnic and other tensions; and support education reform, building on the exemplary experiences of McGill University's programs. .... p. 178

RECOMMENDATION 29

Canada should also pursue increased counter-terrorist and security cooperation with the Government of Indonesia, including for the peaceful resolution of ethnic and other conflicts. ...... p. 178

MALAYSIA

RECOMMENDATION 30

Given that most Canadian development assistance to Malaysia will end in 2004, the Government of Canada should ensure adequate resources remain available to continue working with other countries and moderate civil-society groups — particularly women's groups — to strengthen institutions of governance and support democratic development, pluralism, minority and other human rights in Malaysia. .... p. 190

PART I: CONTENDING WITH THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

> *Misunderstanding ... arising from ignorance breeds fear, and fear remains the greatest enemy of peace. A common fear, however, which usually means a common foe, is also, regrettably, the strongest force bringing people together, but in opposition to something or someone.*
>
> – Lester B. Pearson[4]

When former Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson spoke those words in accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 it was during some of the darkest years of the Cold War. The "common foe" to be feared referred to the Communist powers, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. The ideology of atheistic Communism was frequently portrayed as the principal threat to Western Christian civilization and our way of life. With the passing of the Cold War, some argued that a universal triumph of Western liberal democracy was at hand, perhaps even a "new world order" of peace and prosperity. Others were more pessimistic, noting Iran's Islamic revolution and contending that deeper forms of civilizational conflict were again coming to the fore to challenge Western values. Within this perspective, notably as expressed by Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis[5], radical Islam emerges as the principal, albeit more amorphous, threat to the West. This prediction of confrontations to come has also generated misunderstandings and fears that have been intensified by the terrorism and wars of the early 21st century.

A key problem with any claim of a fundamental incompatibility between Islam and Western values is stated by Emran Qureshi and Michael Sells: "The assertion, regardless of its merits, has become an ideological agent that may help to generate the conflict it posits. The sweeping generalizations of the clash hypothesis may also strengthen and embolden those parties that do pose a serious threat while at the same time making us less able to precisely locate and counter them."[6] In other words, simply assuming mutual antagonism inhibits a sound, nuanced appreciation of the nature of Islam, of contemporary manifestations of "political Islam", and of the diverse political and social realities of Muslim countries. Moreover, as suggested by Benjamin Barber, the American democratic theorist and author of another seminal 1990s text *Jihad versus McWorld*, policies based primarily on fear of an external threat — with Islamic terrorism the current preoccupation of Western governments — can become counterproductive and self-defeating.[7]

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[4] "The Four Faces of Peace", Acceptance Speech upon presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize, Oslo, 1957.

[5] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1996.

[6] Emran Qureshi and Michael Sells, eds., *The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003, p. 3.

Certainly many witnesses urged the Committee to avoid the trap of treating the resurgence of Islam in world politics as something instinctively to be feared. They also welcomed the Committee's efforts to seek a better understanding of the role of Islam in order to improve international relations while reducing the real risks of hostilities and terrorist violence. Such knowledge will be essential to the success of Canada's foreign policies in developing constructive relations with countries of the Muslim world.

In underlining this key introductory point, the Committee takes note as well of the important statement contained in the United Kingdom Government's strategy paper on international priorities presented to the British Parliament in December 2003:

> The possible confrontations of ideas most likely to affect the UK and other western democracies in the early twenty-first century stem from religion and culture. Religious belief is coming back to the fore as a motivating force in international relations. In some cases it is distorted to cloak political purposes. The question will arise most obviously in relations between western democracies and some Islamic countries or groups, despite the underlying shared values of our faiths and cultures. ...
>
> Managing relations with Islamic countries and peoples will be one of the most important strategic challenges for the UK and other western democracies in the next decade and beyond. We shall need to improve our understanding of their religious and political motivation. Our own Muslim communities will have a vital role to play. The agenda will include a serious effort to support peaceful political reform in countries of the Arab world.[8]

The Complexities of "Islam" and of "Islamism" as Political Ideology

Islam is one of the three great monotheistic world religions — the others being Judaism and Christianity — that share a common "Abrahamic" foundational faith tradition. As Professor Houchang Hassan-Yari of the Royal Military College of Canada told the Committee, "Islam sees itself as being the successor, if you will, of monotheistic religions, and not as a belief system which seeks to replace them."[9]

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[7] Benjamin Barber, *Fear's Empire: War, Terrorism, and Democracy*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2003.

[8] *UK International Priorities: A Strategy for the FCO*, United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Crown Copyright, December 2003, p. 15.

[9] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (1010). [Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all meeting numbers refer to the 2nd Session of the 37th Parliament. Time codes in parentheses indicate the location of testimony in the official edited evidence.] Hassan-Yari observed that in the Qu'ran Moses, Jesus and especially Mary are very important figures. On the latter, see also, "A Mary for all: New evidence on links between Judaism, Christianity and Islam", *The Economist*, December 20, 2003, p. 25-29.

One can speak quite properly of "Islamo-Christian civilization" as well as Judaeo-Christian civilization.[10] Yet if these religions are siblings, they have also been historical rivals, sometimes violently so, as well as prone to internal schisms and divisions.[11] Misunderstandings may have been deliberately propagated to justify actions that in truth have little to do with core precepts of submission to God's will or the injunctions to work for peace and justice.

The challenge, as it was put to the Committee in India, is not to judge Islam based on the actions of Muslims, but rather to judge the actions of Muslims based on Islam. Moreover, as Professor Hassan-Yari had observed early on in our hearings:

> Muslim countries and Islam are not the same thing. It is extremely important to make this distinction and that is why I often repeat in my course on the Middle East that if the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, were to show up in Muslim countries today, he would be executed by any one of the Muslim regimes, which illustrates just how wide is the gap between the original doctrine of Islam and today's reality.[12]

Witnesses told the Committee to take care to distinguish Islam's religious principles from its socio-cultural baggage in different places and times[13], to appreciate its positive appeal to growing numbers of modern followers, to not blame Muslims as a whole for the criminal acts of a few, and to avoid simplistic labels and literal definitions — e.g., seeing all "fundamentalism" (a borrowed term from Protestant Christianity) as hostile to the West or equating the term jihad with "holy war".

Taking the latter concept as a prime example of unfortunate confusions, Hassan-Yari insisted that jihad be properly understood in its two senses, the greater of which is as "an ongoing attempt at personal purification ... an internal struggle within each individual".[14] It is the lesser jihad that could involve a defensive just war when the religion is attacked. Indian journalist and former parliamentarian M.J. Akbar acknowledged the "dialectic of war" that exists from Islam's formation. But he argued that even when jihad allows armed force, terrorism is ruled out by the principles and rules of jihad which "are very clear that you cannot kill a non-combatant, you cannot kill women and children. You cannot, in fact, destroy palm tress and vegetation in a jihad. It is that strict a disciplined war."[15] The advent of "suicide terrorism" has unfortunately provoked further damaging controversies about the legitimate application of jihad. Notwithstanding the clear condemnation of suicide in the Qur'an, some, including several expert witnesses in Egypt, appear to try to justify such acts in the context of a political resistance struggle such as the Palestinian intifada as being acts of self-sacrifice or "martyrdom".[16] But as Noah Feldman told the Committee, it is the homicidal intent of such terrorism that should be the focus, and in that regard "there is a very strong argument to be made within Islamic law that even in the prosecution of a legitimate war justifiable under Islamic law terms one may not kill non-combatants, women, children, or other Muslims who happen to be bystanders."[17])

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[10] For a detailed exposition see Richard Bulliet, *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*, Columbia University Press, New York, forthcoming August 2004. Professor Bulliet appeared before the Committee in New York.

[11] There is a huge literature that seeks to explain the nature and history of Islam, its core beliefs, sectarian divisions (the most important being between Sunni Islam and Shi'ism), political tendencies and theological debates. Two useful succinct introductory sources are Malise Ruthven, *Islam: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2000 and John Kaltner, *Islam: What Non-Muslims Should Know*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2003.

[12] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (1010).

[13] This admonition is also one that Muslims have addressed to fellow Muslims. For example Laith Kubba states that: "we Muslims have too often conflated regional or local custom with Islam itself. A fundamental distinction needs to be made between the message of Islam and all the historical traditions that have accumulated around it over the years, not only in Arabia but throughout the world. All of these traditions have been conditioned by their times, by their human limitations, and they should not be confused with Islam itself." ("Faith and Modernity", *Journal of Democracy*, April 2003, p. 48.)

[14] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (1010).

Dr. Üner Turgay, Director of McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies, observed that Islam is not only a profoundly personal religious choice but also a "way of life" embodying political, social and cultural aspects in constant and complex evolution. The interaction of Islamic traditions with modernization has been accompanied by "a great diversity of concerns and interpretations". While there has been calls by some Muslim scholars for a renewal, liberalization or even "reformation" of Islam[18], in many regions that same dynamic has been accompanied by strong countervailing trends "to recapture important practices of the past. … Muslims seem to be increasingly engaged in a search for their roots and identity. The resurgent strength of Islam must be viewed in this light. Social change in the Muslim countries, therefore, is marked by a bizarre blend of tradition and modernity."[19] In such a context, simplistic conceptions of Islam mislead more than clarify. Moreover, as Professor Karim Karim of Carleton University told the Committee: "Terminology can act as a trap and fix our perceptions of people in static and stereotypical manners. Words such as 'fundamentalist', 'conservative',

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[15] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1145). See also A.G. Noorani, *Islam and Jihad: Prejudice Versus Reality*, Zed Books, London, 2003.

[16] Here again, it is important not to tar Islam with the actions or interpretations of a few. Moreover, the phenomenon of modern terrorism and suicide terrorism is much deeper and more extensive than its recent associations with religious fanaticism. (See Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism", *American Political Science Review*, 97:3, August 2003; "Special Report: Suicide Terrorism", *The Economist*, January 10, 2004, p. 20-22.)

[17] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1230).

[18] See Abdou Filali-Ansary, "The Sources of Enlightened Muslim Thought", in "What is Liberal Islam?", *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 14, no. 2, April 2003.

[19] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1540-1550).

'orthodox', 'liberal' or 'progressive', when applied to Muslims, tend to conjure up very particular types of persons."[20]

What most troubles non-Muslims as well as Muslims is not the rich variety of Muslim beliefs and practices but the emergence of extreme forms of politicized Islam that justify the use of violence against others. As the Committee's first witness, Professor Salim Mansur of the University of Western Ontario, pointed out, this kind of Muslim "fundamentalism" is a modern ideological phenomenon that derives its appeal from a litany of historical wrongs that include the real and perceived failures of Muslim rulers. In his view it also developed reactionary intolerant characteristics similar to those of European neo-fascism, with fellow Muslims among its victims from the beginning.[21] At the same time, other witnesses cautioned the Committee to be careful and discriminating when analysing "political Islam" or "Islamism" as a political ideology. Professor John Sigler of Carleton University observed that militant Islamists represent only a small minority of Muslims and are deeply divided among themselves over the justification of violence.[22] Professor David Dewitt of York University made an important point about linking the political implications of Islam to its local circumstances, arguing that Islamism is neither a monolithic nor a necessarily conflictual phenomenon.[23]

While some studies emphasize confronting the dangerous anti-Western aspects of Islamist reaction,[24] others tend to see in Islamist terrorism a desperation move that indicates the failure of an exclusivist backward-looking Islamist political project. In fact, a global expansion of Islam and Islamic consciousness can be viewed as assimilating Westernizing, globalizing influences and as capable of accommodating democratic ideas.[25] An exaggerated fear of Islam's influence on and within Western countries could also be seen to have counter-productive results.[26] Whatever perspective is adopted, we agree that it is important to analyse the specific roots of Islamist radicalism rather than simply attributing its harmful consequences — not least for Muslims themselves — to Islam as a whole. To counteract what some have described as "Islamophobia" will require actions in good faith on the part of both Muslims and non-Muslims.[27] Witnesses called for a rejection of extremist polarizations and for openness to self-critical examinations and moderate interpretations of religious traditions[28] that promote a peaceful pluralism of cultures.

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[20] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1105).

[21] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (0915).

[22] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (0920).

[23] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1110).

[24] Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong: Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, and *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, Modern Library, New York, 2003.

[25] Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2002; Olivier Roy, *L'Islam mondialisé*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2002; Noah Feldman, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2003. See also Graham Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003, and François Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2003.

[26] According to European author Kjell Torbiorn: "Many Western experts on Islamic fundamentalism argue that, despite undeniable efforts to recruit among immigrants in Western Europe, it is basically defensive and, in addition, influences only a small fraction of what is in fact a very diversified and splintered European Muslim population. … The threat to Europe from Islamic fundamentalism may well lie less in its spread than in the popular and political reaction by those who feel threatened by it." (*Destination Europe*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2003, p. 269-70).

The Committee makes no claim to be an interpreter of Islam. Indeed we take to heart the advice of Nazeer Ladhani of the Aga Khan Foundation to "ringfence" the theological side of it[29] that is beyond our competence. What we are interested in are the concrete manifestations of Islam that have important implications for Canadian interests and policies, in particular, on supporting positive pro-democratic developments in Muslim countries and improving relations between majority Muslim and non-Muslim countries. To move in that direction, we recognize that we need to have an appreciation of the world of contemporary Islam that fully takes into account its vast diversity and complexity.

The Complex Contours and Dynamics of the "Muslim World"

When we speak of the "Muslim world" we recognize that this is only a convenient shorthand to describe a very complex reality. At the broadest level it encompasses the world's approximately 1.4 billion followers of Islam as the religion founded by the Prophet Muhammad 1,400 years ago. They share a certain commonality as members of the *ummah*, the global community of believers, although as previously noted there are also important sectarian divisions as well as theological differences in the interpretation of Islamic law (*sharia*). Muslims constitute majorities in nearly 50 countries and significant minorities, totalling about 500 million people, in a number of others. (See Appendix I for a brief profile by country.) The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the headquarters of which Committee members visited in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, currently has 57 member and three observer states.

At the OIC's tenth summit held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative to Afghanistan observed that "The Islamic world is indeed a mosaic not a monolith. It stretches from Indonesia to Morocco and from Central Europe to Southern Africa. It reaches into western Europe, the Americas, Australia and Asia. It comprises men and women divided by race, culture or language, yet united by the powerful bond of Islam."[30] For evidence of that continuing common bond, Dr. Sheema Khan, Chair of Council on American-Islamic Relations Canada pointed to the ritual of hajj, the pilgrimage that annually brings millions of Muslims to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. For all the variations of Muslim countries, there is still very much a Muslim world in that global devotional sense.[31]

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[27] See Akbar Ahmed, *Islam Under Siege: Living Dangerously in a Post-Honour World*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2003.

[28] The concept of 'ijtihad' in Islam would seem to embrace such an evolving understanding of its teachings.

[29] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1655).

The foundational religious importance of the Arabian peninsula also accounts for the Middle East being viewed as the "religious heart" of Islam, even though as Indian author and journalist M.J. Akbar explained, its "demographic heart" is Asian and there is an expanding diaspora of which Canada is now part.[32] Barely one-fifth of the world's Muslims today are Arab. Still it is in the Middle East that the most persistent sources of conflict lie and that has been the most affected by external interventions and wars (going back to the imperial machinations that followed the First World War and resulted in the creation of modern Iraq[33]). Looking into the current post-war future, Akbar observed that the region's geopolitics and Islamic future are being reshaped by the fact that "For the first time in 1,400 years, Iraq will be ruled by a certain form of Shia majority government. … An area from the border of Syria, including in its penumbra some substantial part of Saudi Arabia, will be Shia dominated."[34]

Brahimi's speech to the OIC Summit acknowledged the great historical achievements of Islamic civilizations, yet went on to note that there is a pervasive sense of malaise within much of the contemporary Muslim world which he described as being in a "sad state". Declaring that such a state is neither natural nor inevitable, he challenged his audience: "The Muslim peoples are capable of much greater things — and they know it. … only when Muslims enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms — only when the Holy Qur'an is understood as enjoining education for all, and when the creative talent of so many Muslims, including women, is harnessed to develop the Muslim communities — only then will the Islamic world be able to assert its influence in shaping world events for the better."

Much of the debate among Muslims is how to address that challenge given the often negative political and social circumstances of Muslim countries. We are conscious of University of Calgary Professor Tareq Ismael's caution that the geo-religious term "Muslim world" can be very "precarious" as a political construct, especially if used to imply an opposition to the West.[35] As Houchang Hassan-Yari pointed out, despite Islam's foundational interrelationship of religion and political society, there are enormous differences at the political level within and among Muslim states ranging from the "totally democratic to totally dictatorial". Moreover, territorial divisions have multiplied as part of the unfortunate legacies of imperialism and colonialism, the dissolution of the Ottoman empire (and abolition of the Caliphate in the 1920s), and the rise of competing secular nationalisms. Professor Saleem Qureshi of the University of Alberta argued that in Muslim countries emerging from imperial domination westernized elites and institutions have been discredited by their failure to deliver on promises to improve living conditions. Muslim countries have also gone to war with each other, as in the protracted Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. Despite the creation of groupings like the Arab League and the OIC, there has been little evidence of cohesion within a Muslim world capable of acting as a recognizable unit in world politics.[36]

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[30] Address of October 16, 2003, reprinted in the *Iran News*, October 20, 2003, p. 9.

[31] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1130).

[32] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1145).

[33] See Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, Random House, New York, 2003, especially chapters 26 to 28 on "The End of the Ottomans", "Arab Independence", and "Palestine".

[34] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1200).

At the same time, as Professor Sami Anoun of the University of Sherbrooke observed, the general unease affecting a diverse and disjointed "Muslim space" connects to a series of complicated dialectics: between tradition and modernity, involving ethno-national liberation struggles (e.g., Chechnya, Kashmir), and struggles for more internal democracy. In many Muslim countries civil societies remain too weak. State structures are too bureaucratic and guilty of poor performance in meeting people's basic needs. Demands for change are not being accommodated within countries in ways that most Muslims can feel good about, while foreign interventions are viewed with suspicion.[37] Public opinion surveys of Muslim countries have shown strong aspirations for democratic rights and religious freedoms, yet paradoxically also rising levels of distrust of Western policies and motives, in particular those of the United States.[38]

Many witnesses saw education and dialogue as imperatives to begin to better understand and cope with these troubling dynamics. Nazeer Ladhani of the Aga Khan Foundation stressed the need to address damaging "misperceptions" of the Muslim world that neglect the many positive interactions of Islam with other religious-cultural traditions, that assume an incompatibility of Islam with secular modernity and liberal democracy, and that portray the Muslim world as "intellectually stagnant". Improving understanding as a basis for policy will require overcoming stereotypical simplifications and pursuing pluralistic encounters. As he put it:

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[35] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1110). For careful contextual perspectives see "In the Name of God: A Survey of Islam and the West", *The Economist*, September 13, 2003; also Amin Saikal, *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003.

[36] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (1015).

[37] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1150).

[38] The disturbing trends of pervasive anger and mistrust in Muslim countries towards American policies were confirmed in the latest survey of global attitudes conducted almost a year after the Iraq war by the Pew Research Center for People & the Press (http://www.people-press.org) and released March 16, 2004.

> Because the Muslim world is so diverse, Canada's relationship with it needs to be nuanced, multidimensional, and responsive to the dramatically different issues, opportunities, and challenges [of different regions and countries] ... We must also be careful not to view or approach our relations with countries of Muslims solely through the lens of religion or to view all conflicts involving Muslim peoples as inherently rooted in religion. Rather, Canada needs to cultivate dense, multifaceted relationships with governments at all levels, civil society institutions and communities of interest within the Muslim world that can address the range of mutually important issues in their full complexity.[39]

From a "Clash" to a "Dialogue" of Civilizations

Many people who spoke to the Committee took issue with the "clash of civilizations" thesis as being a critical impediment to mutual understanding and better relations. Although usually attributed to Samuel Huntington, Richard Bulliet points out that the idea of such a "clash" is hardly original and was used in reference to Islam by American Protestant missionaries in the 1920s.[40] The current post-Cold War usage of this controversial phrase stems from a seminal 1990 *Atlantic Monthly* article by the noted historian Bernard Lewis. In "The Roots of Muslim Rage", Lewis seems to connect the sources of Islamic extremism with a classical conception of Islam as antagonistic towards other religions and Western modernity. The result "is no less than a clash of civilizations — the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judaeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide importance of both." Huntington drew on this analysis to elaborate (in a 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs* and a 1996 book cited earlier) a more sweeping hypothesis that sees a resurgent Islamic movement as being in ideological conflict with the West and having "bloody borders".[41]

Numerous critics of Lewis and Huntington contend that this leads to a negative caricature of Islam that ironically becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, strengthening the hand of Muslim extremists who are only too eager to assert a fundamental hostility between "true" Islam and the Western world. Rather than a clash of civilizations, various analysts and commentators have suggested instead a clash of "fundamentalisms"[42], "eschatologies"[43], "definitions"[44], or "perceptions"[45]. Some attempt to explain how religious factors have been exploited to provoke conflicts that are really political and/or ideological in nature. Some broadly lament "a confusion of misunderstandings, crude stereotypes, and parallel absences of self-knowledge".[46]

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[39] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1620).

[40] Bulliet, p. 5ff.

[41] See Qureshi and Sells, p. 3-12.

Clearly this is contested territory that can all too easily lend itself to the kind of media and popular distortions to which many Muslims understandably object.[47] Ways must be found to distinguish a positive Islamic affirmation and search for identity and purpose from the threat posed by Islamic terrorism or perceived in extreme versions of Islam such as the puritanical "Wahhabism" that Saudi Arabia is often accused of exporting. Far from being in denial about the problems within Muslim societies, many Muslims appear frustrated by a situation that blocks change from below while reinforcing opposing rhetorical extremes.

Raja Khouri, National President of the Canadian Arab Federation, saw the Muslim world as being "caught between extremist zealots subverting Islam to serve their aggressive ends, on the one hand, and corrupt, incompetent dictatorial regimes on the other. The vast majority of Arabs and Muslims, however, reject extremism and look to enhance civil society through representative governments. ... How the West responds to growing extremism and polarization may determine whether the world heads towards peace and prosperity or war and catastrophe. The 'us versus them' attitude espoused by the current U.S. administration and extremists in the Muslim world is a sure way towards the latter." Khouri argued that "friendly dictators" should be condemned and a helping hand extended "to reformists, intellectuals, human rights advocates, and civil society in Muslim countries so we can help them reform themselves."[48] Critics argue that the

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[42] Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*, Verso, London, 2002.

[43] Scholars have noted Christianity's own history of religious conflicts, the apparent revival of militant forms of affirmation across religions, and the prevalence of religious discourse in American politics. According to American public affairs journalist David Brooks: "Americans are as active as anyone else in the clash of eschatolgies." ("Kicking the Secularist Habit", *The Atlantic Monthly*, March 2003, p. 28.)

[44] See Edward Said, "The Clash of Definitions", in Qureshi and Sells, in which he concludes that "efforts to return the community of civilizations to a primitive stage of narcissistic struggle need to be understood not as descriptions about how in fact they behave but rather as incitements to wasteful conflict and unedifying chauvinism" (p. 87).

[45] See *Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Perceptions? In Search of Common Ground for Understanding, Report of the Dialogues: Islamic World-US-the West Conference organized in Granada, Spain*, October 28-31, 2002, World Policy Institute, New School University, New York, 2003. In New York, the Committee met Mustpha Tlili, founder and director of the Dialogue project of the World Policy Institute that organized this conference.

[46] Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, "Preface" to Booth and Dunne, eds., *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002.

[47] For an analysis of these see Karim Karim, *Islamic Peril: Media and Global Violence*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2003.

[48] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1120).

West sends out damaging mixed messages when it identifies Islam with dangerous forms of anti-Western militancy yet remains complicit in supporting repressive Muslim regimes.[49]

In rejecting an ideological clash of civilizations approach, many witnesses called for alternative initiatives to foster instead a mutually respectful "dialogue of civilizations". Aspects of this would involve various inter-church and interfaith activities, academic and educational exchanges, among a range of nongovernmental activities already taking place that could be expanded and intensified. At a more global and intergovernmental level, John Sigler referred to the initiative a few years ago for such a dialogue that was proposed within the United Nations — with the strong support of the reformist president of Iran, as we heard in Tehran — but that was almost immediately dealt a severe setback by the terrible events of September 11, 2001.[50]

Given what has happened since, including the continuing threat of terrorist violence in the name of Islam and the deepening of negative attitudes towards Western intervention in many parts of the Muslim world, it seems to us more important than ever to renew efforts to avoid conceptual antitheses that virtually preordain future hostilities. Working pragmatically and cooperatively on finding paths for constructive political and inter-cultural dialogue presupposes mutual respect and comprehension of the other. That will not succeed if there are implicit claims of superiority by one side or if fear becomes the dominant motivation for engagement with Muslim societies.

The Aftermath of September 11, 2001 and the "War on Terrorism"

A number of witnesses told the Committee that Muslims themselves feel victimized by the fallout from the attacks on the twin towers and the Pentagon in 2001 and the subsequent "war on terrorism". There is resentment of counter-terrorism measures that may appear to target Muslim populations and of rhetoric that seems to imply that Islam bears some of the responsibility for terrorism carried out in its name.[51] And while repressive regimes have been overthrown by military force in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is little sign that the internationalized diffuse jihadism spread by networks such as al-Qaeda can be defeated either militarily or through security measures alone.[52] While some analysts such as Gwynne Dyer contend that the threat from Islamic terrorism is often exaggerated and exploited to serve the agendas of those in power, there is no question that it constitutes a real risk to be taken seriously into the foreseeable future.[53]

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[49] For example, Qureshi and Sells observe: "For many Muslims it is a bitter irony that the dominant stereotype of Islam is based upon the Saudi model of police-state repression, religious intolerance, oppression of women, moral hypocrisy among the male elite, and an aggressive and highly funded export of militant anti-Western ideology — and that the Saudi monarchy is kept in power by the very Western nations that display fear and loathing at that stereotype." (*The New Crusades*, p. 17.)

[50] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (0915). President Khatami's call for a dialogue of civilizations was endorsed by the eighth summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Tehran in 2001, which was also proclaimed by the UN as the international year of such dialogue.

[51] For example, David Frum and Richard Perle write in *An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror* (Random House, New York, 2003) that: "The roots of Muslim rage are to be found in Islam itself. There is no middle way. It is victory or holocaust."

Professor Farhang Rajaee of Carleton University described September 11 as "a very important wake-up call" for Muslims as well as the world as a whole. It led to a realization that the heartland of the Muslim world is haunted by an ideology of Islamism that justifies violence.[54] In a detailed submission accompanying his testimony on the anatomy of such terrorism, Rajaee states that:

> Its root lies in the emergence of what may be termed as "the rage of empowered dispossessed." What one observes among Muslims is the empowerment of a generation who feel exploited and wrenched away from their identity and roots, empowered by the very same processes such as modernization and globalization that caused those feelings. The tragedy is that their empowerment is guided or rather misguided by an ideology of extremism and polarization … the diabolical ideologization of Islam and its emancipating heritage. What is striking is that the Muslim world, with its historical track of toleration and peaceful growth, as a civilization, displays a high degree of violence and terrorism.[55]

As Rajaee argues, it is important to understand the phenomenon of Islamic terrorism, not in any way to justify or apologize for it, but in order to overcome it by getting at the roots of its growth and appeal. That in turn raises the question of the most effective means to be employed. Rajaee suggested the metaphor of the surgeon or terminator versus the health care worker or gardener to describe contrasting approaches. The problem with the former approach of elimination advocated by "terrorologists" is that it is not discriminating. It fails to understand or address sources of accumulated and perceived injustices that form part of the terrorism's "triangle" of sense of injustice, empowerment, and ideology.[56]

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[52] As *The Economist* observes: "Another part of the anti-al-Qaeda strategy ought to be the education of western publics. Talk of a 'war' itself encourages people to believe in a clear and not-too-distant victory, whereas the apocalyptic spirit of al-Qaeda may be around for decades." ("Still out there", January 10, 2004, p. 10.)

[53] See Walter Laqueur, *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, Continuum, New York, 2003; and for an analysis by Canadian officials of the extent of the jihadist threat worldwide, Canada, Department of National Defence, *Compendium of Global Jihadism*, Directorate of Strategic Analysis, Policy Planning Division, Ottawa, June 2003. One irony of the current situation is that Islamist militancy appears to be gaining ground in occupied Iraq after having been ruthlessly suppressed by Saddam Hussein's secular Baathist regime. On the "expanding religious dimension of the insurgency" in Iraq, see "The Rise of the Jihadists", *Time*, January 26, 2004, p. 18-19.

[54] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1130).

[55] *Brief*, "Religion and Violence; Muslims and the Global Condition", submitted September 23, 2003, p. 1-2. What is also striking is the degree to which religious motivations, which had almost disappeared from the study of modern terrorism, reappeared with such a vengeance after the 1980s. See Charles Townshend, *Terrorism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002, especially chapter 6 "Religious Terror"; also Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd edition, University of California Press, 2003; Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, Ecco, 2003.

No country can afford to be complacent about terrorism and its potential impact. That includes Canada, as Reid Morden, a former head of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) made plain when he observed in the spring of 2003: "Here in Canada about a year ago the *Toronto Star* published a very long article surveying the attitude of the 50-plus mosques in the Greater Toronto area, and it reached the sobering conclusion that while a vast majority of those mosques promoted a moderate and inclusive message, a very substantial minority preached a much more radical and violent message. We shouldn't be surprised. Terrorism and the violence associated with it are not new to Canada."[57]

David Dewitt made the point that it is in Canada's interest to become much more aware of the varying features of Muslim civil societies without glossing over the extent to which extremism can infiltrate those societies. "Lumping them [Islamist forces] all together in terms of the Taliban, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or Jamaat Islamia is as mistaken as assuming that all mosques and imams are under the influence of the Wahhabi. … nor should we … pretend that there are no extremist forces at play both within Muslim countries and within the larger Muslim world, influenced and supported directly by some Islamic institutions or indirectly through groups and governments. That holds for institutions in Canada, the Islamic schools and mosques, as elsewhere."[58]

If the association of Islamist extremism with contemporary terrorism is a particularly sensitive problem for Muslim communities, especially in the wake of "9/11", it should also be seen as a problem for the policies of Western governments which must take some responsibility for redressing the conditions that have led to the rise of this extremism. That challenge of both critically understanding and responding to the extremist threat within the Muslim world was bluntly stated by Houchang Hassan-Yari:

> It [Islamic fundamentalism] is a reaction to the inability of this system of nation-states to create a democratic system. It is a reaction to these dictatorial regimes, to this colonial system, to this imperial system we have today. Basically, it is a reaction to the endless failures of Islamic countries. And finally, I would say that the people trying to capitalize on these failures are frauds. If you want to get rid of the fanatics, the extremists and fundamentalists, you just have to put an end to the external meddling in the domestic affairs of these countries. Paternalistic behavior has to be abandoned. The humiliation of these people has to be stopped. The Arab-Israeli conflict needs to be

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[56] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1135).

[57] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (0930).

[58] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1115).

> halted. ... ties between dictatorial regimes and western interests in general, and American interests in particular, must be cut.[59]

Iris Almeida, Director of Policy, Programmes and Planning for the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development made a related and reinforcing point in the Committee's last public hearing when she emphasized that "we cannot understand the Muslim world if we don't understand the reality of humiliation that many Muslims in the world over the last couple of years have been experiencing by global policies, by international media. This humiliation is at the root of a lot of the atrocities and expressions of incivility. When I talk about humiliation I mean isolation, I mean poverty. You know those three go hand in hand."[60]

The Spread of Islam and Liberal-Democratic Values

The apparent desire expressed by Muslims themselves for more democracy within Muslim countries, contrasted with the persistent lack of democratic freedoms and accountable government in much of the Muslim world, constitutes one of the most difficult challenges of the current international context. Only 8 of 46 Muslim-majority countries are electoral democracies. At the same time, surveys in many Muslim countries show that these majorities do not necessarily want a Western-style secular democracy. But, as Sheema Khan of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (Canada) puts it, "the practical question remains: How can Muslims combine democratic ideals with the strong presence of their faith?"[61] Some see the separation of religion and state and recognition of equal rights for women as remaining problematic areas in working out a liberal-democratic interpretation of Islam. Others argue that there is nothing intrinsic to Islam that conflicts with modern standards of democracy and the individual human rights that have been affirmed in United Nations and other international instruments.

A compellingly optimistic view of the integration of Islamic and democratic ideas was presented by the Committee's final witness of 2003, Dr. Noah Feldman, a professor at New York University Law School who has been a constitutional advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq and members of the Iraqi Governing Council. In his noted book, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy*, he states:

> Today Muslims around the world embrace the elegance, logic, and depth of Islam perhaps more warmly that at any time in a century. In Islam's language of justice, morality, hope, and commitment , they find not only religion, but a

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[59] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (1115).

[60] *Evidence*, February 25, 2004, Meeting No. 3 (1620).

[61] Sheema Khan, "Can there be Islamic Democracy?", *The Globe and Mail*, September 12, 2003, p. A23.

> vital force in the realms of politics, society, and the spirit. At the same time, as their reliance on Islam grows, Muslims are also embracing the ideals of self-government and freedom associated with democracy. To an increasing number of Muslims, these democratic values resonate with Islam and can develop in tandem with it. Wherever advocates have been free to speak out or run for office in the name of Islamic democracy, they have found an eager audience.[62]

Writing over a decade ago historian Bernard Lewis had accepted that a compatible development of Islam and liberal democracy was an open possibility. But he saw the question of how to encourage and not inhibit democratic development in Muslim countries in the light of twin temptations "to which Western governments have all too often succumbed, with damaging results." The temptation of the right has been to accept non-democratic and even dictatorial regimes as a manageable evil provided that they are seen as friendly to Western interests, thereby harming internal democratic oppositions. The temptation of the left has been to apply pressures to which the dictatorships are impervious but which prove too much for the "more moderate autocracies". According to Lewis: "The pressure for premature democratization can fatally weaken such regimes and lead to their overthrow, not by democratic opposition but by other forces that then proceed to establish a more ferocious and determined dictatorship."[63]

Indeed the Committee at times heard arguments along the lines that external countries should be exceedingly careful what they wish for when promoting democracy and human rights. Push too hard, for example, for free and fair elections and the result may be to bring to power a radically Islamist government hostile to Western aims. The first such election could be the last. Michael Bell of the University of Toronto, a former Canadian ambassador to Middle Eastern countries, counselled caution.

> I don't think we should use the term 'democratization', because then we get into a question of Islamic radical groups saying "We're all for democracy", and governments saying "Well, we're all for democracy, but we're faced with these threats to overthrow the regime and it values, and therefore we can't tolerate them." Frankly, I doubt that many of those who seek to replace existing regimes by revolutionary force would end up being very different from the present regimes.[64]

But in contrast to the sceptics of strong and externally supported democracy-building measures, Noah Feldman argued forcefully against another temptation to be avoided. He also urged that Canada contribute its experience to the pivotal prospects for democracy in Iraq.[65] Coincidentally on the same day that U.S. President George Bush was outlining a new "forward strategy for freedom in the Middle East" in a speech marking the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy[66], Feldman put it to the Committee that:

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[62] Feldman, p. 6-7.

[63] Bernard Lewis, "Islam and Liberal Democracy", *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1993.

[64] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1140).

> We need to change our policies — we in the United States especially, but again I believe I'm speaking for other western democracies as well — to encourage and support governments that show active signs of democratization and distance ourselves from governments that continue to violate human rights and that do not listen to the voices of their own people. We must not give in to the temptation — and it is a great temptation — to listen to governments in the region that tell us that if it were not for them the alternative would be worse; the alternative would be Islamic politics.[67]

Feldman emphasized that a substantive change in policies was "by far the more important" dimension of a strategy of pro-democratic engagement with Muslim countries. While that strategy might include new public diplomacy measures — see, for example, those proposed in a bipartisan report to the U.S. Congress in October 2003[68] — it will have to deliver real change, overturning a legacy of mistrust, lack of credibility as well as perceived legitimacy among many Muslims that is the Achilles heel of democracy promotion overtures.[69] This will be a key test for whatever ambitious "Greater Middle East" initiative for democratic reform that President Bush may propose to G8 partners at the summit to be hosted by the U.S. in June 2004.[70] Critical reactions have underlined complex challenges still to be addressed in launching genuine democratization processes in this region.[71]

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[65] Feldman made the case to the Committee that if a democratic evolution does not succeed in Iraq and Afghanistan it will be a victory for extremists who want to convince Muslims that Islam and liberal democracy are incompatible. See also his article "Islam and democracy: the great experiment", in *The Economist: The World in 2004*, p. 64.

[66] Although described by President Bush as a "new policy", it is an elaboration on already stated U.S. policy objectives. For an exposition of those see Richard Haas, "Toward Greater Democracy in the Muslim World", *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2003, 26:3, p. 137-48.

[67] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1120).

[68] *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab & Muslim World*, Report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, Washington D.C., October 1, 2003. At the end of January 2004, a new U.S. government-funded television network Al-Hurra ("The Free One") was due to begin broadcasting in Arabic throughout the Middle East. (See Sheldon Alberts, "CNN with an Arabic Twist", *National Post*, December 19, 2003.) See also Anthony Kujawa, "Panel Urges Renewed Public Diplomacy Efforts to Engage Muslim World: Says U.S. must effectively listen, engage in genuine dialogue," *The Washington File*, March 2, 2004 (U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Public Programs, accessed at: http://usinfo.state.gov).

[69] For a critical assessment of the U.S. approach see Thomas Carothers, "Democracy: Terrorism's Uncertain Antidote", *Current History*, December 2003, p. 403-406.

[70] According to a report in *The Washington Post*, such an initiative "would call for Arab and South Asian governments to adopt major political reforms, be held accountable on human rights — particularly women's empowerment — and introduce economic reforms ... ". (Robin Wright and Glenn Kessler, "Bush Aims for 'Greater Mideast' Plan, Democracy Initiative to be Aired at G-8 Talks", February 9, 2004, p. A1.) The article stated that Canadian and Danish officials are also working on draft proposals in this area. A subsequent *Globe and Mail* article suggested these might include "eventually creating an umbrella organization and human-rights charter" covering the entire Middle East region (Drew Fagan, "Canada tiptoes into Mideast politics: Joint diplomatic venture with Denmark aims to modernize government in the region", March 3, 2004, p. A16.)

Following Feldman, one of the elements of a revised approach would be to affirm an interpretation of Islam that explicitly supports liberal democracy. As he expressed it:

> The crucial thing that I think we in western democracies need to do is to remind ourselves that the word "Islam" does not inherently mean what the extremists would like you to believe it means. It can mean a system of values and beliefs that respects God's sovereignty and simultaneously gives room for the exercise of individual rights. Even though it's uncomfortable for us to take sides in a debate about what someone else's religion might mean, whether we like it or not we are taking sides in that debate just by having a foreign policy that engages other countries in the world, just by having our own views and values. I think we should get over the feeling that we can't say what we think the right beliefs are, and we should just espouse our liberal values openly and say, "We're all for your religion, because you tell us it has all these great liberal things in it."[72]

Other witnesses agreed that recognition and encouragement should be given to moderate liberal directions within Islamic thought, especially if these have a harder time getting a hearing than the confrontational rhetoric of vocal minorities.[73] Professor Turgay accepted that: "Muslim intellectuals today must come forward and claim their religion from the radicals. … When we shrink from it, fundamentalists move in."[74] In later testimony he added: "We have to challenge some of the policies of Muslim governments. … Many Muslim governments are hiding behind Islam [and] cultural relativism, if you will. As Canadians, we have to argue for at least a minimum common denominator. … These are our very basic values."[75] When it comes to supporting democracy and human rights in the Muslim world, David Dewitt argued that "neutrality is not an honourable or necessary posture. We should take positions and they should reflect our values."[76]

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[71] See, for example, Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, *The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief 29, March 2004; and "The Greater Middle East Initiative: Implementing a Vision", *Strategic Comments*, 10:2, March 2004. See also the regional overview in Part III for further reference to the U.S. G8 proposals on Middle East reform.

[72] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1200).

[73] See Radwan Masmoudi, "The Silenced Majority", in "What is Liberal Islam?", *Journal of Democracy*, April 2003, p. 40-44. It may be possible to give a moderate liberal reading even of philosophers identified with militant Islamism such as Sayyid Qutb, the leading light of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. (See M.A. Muqtedar Khan, "Radical Islam, Liberal Islam", *Current History*, December 2003, p. 417-421.)

[74] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1725).

[75] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1250).

[76] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1125).

Professor Hassan-Yari was among those pointing out that ideas of democracy, freedom, justice, equality and tolerance can be traced back to Qur'anic sources and early Islamic practices, "but it is imperative to update them".[77] For example, the concept of *shura* or community consultation could be given a more vigorous democratic interpretation adapted to modern circumstances, according to Turkish Professor of Islamic Law Osman Tastan.[78] As to the notion that Islamic law, *sharia*, is anti-liberal in some fundamental respects, Professor Feldman stressed that it is a form of common law that requires historical human interpretation and wise application. As he put it: "I don't think we should react in fear to the idea of the word *sharia* just because some of its less sophisticated practitioners have used it in a way that's obviously deeply offensive to liberal sensibilities."[79]

The historically close connection of religion and politics in Islam is both complex and contested. It has given rise to arguments that the spreading public influence of Islam (even symbolically — witness the furious controversies that have erupted in countries like France over women and girls wearing the Muslim headscarf or 'hijab') could threaten the political sphere's secular autonomy that is seen as a guarantor of democratic equality.[80] But the boundary separating religion and state has also been a problem for Judaeo-Christian political traditions to overcome. (As remarked by a witness in Turkey, an Islamic society with a consciously secular political constitution, it was Christian Europe that produced notions such as "the divine right of kings", and religion remains an important factor in the politics of some Western democracies.) Countries such as India and Indonesia, with majority or very large Muslim populations, have demonstrated that Muslim countries can be democracies. Muslim minorities also participate as active citizens in Western liberal democracies without seeing that as in conflict with their faith. Feldman argues convincingly that secular democracies can accommodate the practice of Islam and that Muslim societies can evolve democratically without losing their Islamic character.

Human Rights Challenges, Equality for Women and for Minorities

A crucial aim in the promotion of moderate Muslim democracies will be to ensure that Muslim countries are able to progress along their own distinctive democratic paths in ways that also increase, or at least do not diminish, respect for the equal rights of all citizens of those countries. That includes the rights of women as well as men. It also includes the rights of religious, ethnic and other minorities. In some cases, the main focus may be on a struggle just to achieve basic recognition for these rights; in other cases, it may be to prevent any erosion of existing rights. Varying country circumstances may also determine what are realistic objectives in terms of ongoing efforts to both defend and advance the equality of rights and to end discrimination.[81] For example, as the report addresses later, the situation of women in Turkey is obviously vastly different from the conditions confronting women in other parts of the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia. But what is at stake in all these cases is the compatibility of Islamic influences on states and societies with the standards of human rights that have been affirmed by the international community through the United Nations. That is the bar that must be reached and maintained.

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[77] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (1015).

[78] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 52 (1230).

[79] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1215).

[80] See the dossier on "L'islam et la laïcité!", *Historia*, October 2003, p. 48-67. On the European debate over the Muslim headscarf see "The war of the headscarves", *The Economist*, "Special report: Integrating minorities", February 7, 2004, p. 24-26.

A key issue therefore is the development of Muslim approaches that in practice observe fundamental individual human rights and freedoms, applying equally to women and to minorities. This is among the questions that have emerged forcefully in the current attempts to forge new constitutions for Afghanistan and Iraq that will respect democratic-human rights principles and Islamic law while obtaining popular legitimacy. More broadly, there are issues of violence against women, such as so-called "honour killings", or systematic discrimination against women, notably in educational and economic spheres, that must be faced by many Muslim societies.

Canada and other liberal democracies therefore need to consider how best to support women's groups and other civil-society forces working for human rights reforms and improvements. For example, Canadian assistance is making a difference in supporting the Women's Rights Fund in Afghanistan.[82] Another promising avenue of support could be through the activities of transnational non-governmental coalitions and networks, as also suggested by the testimony of Mr. Jean-Louis Roy, President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, who referred to his Centre's longstanding association with the network known as "Women Living Under Muslim Law", as well as to its work with civil-society partners in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.[83] It was pointed out that even very small sums can go far in underpinning this valuable work.

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[81] On the diverse challenges of pursuing human rights progress in Muslim societies, see Katerina Dalacoura, *Islam, Liberalism and Human Rights*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2003; Amyn Sajoo, ed., *Civil Society in the Muslim World: Contemporary Perspectives*, I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 2003.

[82] See Sally Armstrong, "A Rights Revolution: Canadians are trying to help Afghan women shake off centuries of oppression", *Maclean's*, March 8, 2004, p. 38-39.

[83] *Evidence*, February 25, 2004, Meeting No. 3. See also the study carried out for the Centre by Rachad Antonius, "Democratic Development in the Middle East and North Africa", May 2002 (accessible at http://www.ichrdd.ca). Its continuing work in this area included a March 22, 2004 experts' seminar on "Democracy, Human Rights and Islam in the Middle East and North Africa".

In raising these kinds of positive interventions to support an expansion of human rights in Muslim countries, it should be clearly understood that this is *not* a question of simply imposing "our" values on others. The Committee sees this as a common endeavour based on shared values and mutual respect that includes respect for the Islamic faith. We note that Iranian human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on October 10, 2003 (the first Muslim woman to be so honoured), shortly before Committee members held meetings in Tehran, has insisted that Islam is fully consistent with the advancement of women's rights; rather the problem is with male-dominated societal and cultural practices. In her Nobel speech in Oslo on December 10, Ebadi declared:

> Some Muslims, under the pretext that democracy and human rights are not compatible with the traditional structure of Islamic societies, have justified despotic governments, and continue to do so. Islam is a religion whose first sermon begins with the word "Recite!" Such a sermon and message cannot be in conflict with knowledge, wisdom, freedom of opinion and expression, and cultural pluralism. The discriminatory plight of women in Islamic states, whether in the sphere of civil law or in the realm of social, political and cultural justice, has its roots in the male-dominated culture prevailing in these societies, not in Islam. This patriarchal culture does not tolerate freedom and democracy or equal rights of men and women, because it would threaten the traditional position of the rulers of that culture.[84]

Another Muslim democracy and human rights activist argues that segregation of the sexes and discrimination on the basis of gender, however ubiquitous in Muslim history, "have no justification at all … in our religion's original message. It has come from an extra-Islamic idiom, and labelled with the name of Islam."[85]

Senator Mobina Jaffer, the first Muslim woman appointed to the Canadian Senate, told the Committee that: "Indeed, Muslim women do suffer in the hands of bearded fanatics who drape themselves in the cloak of Islam, yet the position of these zealots is untenable when weighed against the tenets of the faith." She encouraged the Committee to ask direct questions about the real extent of Muslim women's educational/political rights and their freedom to choose: "Are women themselves making these choices or are they being made for them by others?"[86]

In short, it also comes back again to scrutinizing the behavior of Muslims and Muslim regimes from a clear and inclusive standpoint of democratic rights and fundamental freedoms for all, while avoiding the trap of attributing abuses to Islam itself. Making Islam the problem can be as simplistic and misleading as the opposite mantra of extreme Islamists that "Islam is the solution". Without a broadening of knowledge and dialogue in relations with the Muslim world, there are unlikely to be credible solutions emerging that respect both democratic values and human rights. And that should concern us all.

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[84] As reprinted in *The Globe and Mail*, December 11, 2003, p. A15.

[85] Laith Kubba, "Faith and Modernity", *Journal of Democracy*, April 2003, p. 48.

[86] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1140).

Looking Ahead

Canada is being called upon to become more engaged and more resolute in its diplomacy towards the Muslim world. As Salim Mansur appealed to the Committee:

> Canada needs to take a much greater interest in the Muslim world. It is one-fifth of humanity, it has a tremendous potential, it has a great civilization from the past, and if it is properly assisted in meeting its shortcomings, the gains can be of benefit for all of us in our increasingly globalized village. But Canada must not remain distant and fearful of making right judgements about problems the Muslim world faces, problems that can become transnational, as did Muslim fundamentalism. ... There are more Muslims around the world intimidated, abused, and silenced by the politics of Muslim fundamentalism, especially women and minorities within the Muslim world, who look to us for their reprieve, and we betray them when, for the wrong sorts of politics or political correctness, we stand aside without actively joining the fight against such tyranny and oppression carried out in the name of religion.[87]

At the same time, Canadian policy will have to develop sophisticated capacities to address an array of situational challenges as diverse as they are complex, including in the way that we respond to the phenomenon of Islamist extremism. As John Sigler advised:

> So we need an analysis that gets beyond simple categories and to comparable experiences across cultures and time. The primary emphasis in the war on terror must be on enhanced police and intelligence professionalism, all of which must be held within the protection of basic human rights. Our own need for understanding what has happened and what needs to be done is to greatly expand our sense of history and the complexity of multiple layers of reality, and most of all, for dialogue and the building of bridges, not further barriers to shared identities and values in a complex globalized world.[88]

There is much to be done. Heading into the Government's planned comprehensive review of Canada's international relations policies, it is worth recalling that the subject addressed by this report is one that was completely absent from the last official foreign policy statement *Canada in the World* issued in 1995, even though that was after the first major attempt by Islamist terrorists to bring down the World Trade Center towers. Any complacency should have been banished by the events of September 11, 2001. However, a sufficient and sustained policy focus remains a largely unfinished agenda.

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[87] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (0920).

[88] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (0925).

Accordingly:

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Government of Canada should explicitly recognize relations with the countries of the Muslim world as an important area of foreign policy attention and strategic planning. In addition, the Government should use the forthcoming international policy review as a means to deepen Canadian public engagement on issues of foreign policy development involving Muslim communities in Canada and relations with Muslim countries.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Government of Canada should strengthen the analytical and diplomatic capacities required to be effective in enhancing Canada's relations with the countries of the Muslim world.

PART II: DEVELOPING THE ELEMENTS OF A CONSTRUCTIVE CANADIAN APPROACH

> *It now appears that 9/11 not only shook us out of our complacent sense of security, it also opened our eyes to a complex, dangerous and needy world. Indeed, I don't think it would be an exaggeration to say that we have learned more about the world and international affairs in the past 27 months than we did in the previous 27 years.*[89]
>
> Allan Gregg

The Changing International and Domestic Environments

The Committee's study of Canada's relations with the countries of the Muslim world has underlined the complexity of modern international relations, in terms of both dynamics in key regions around the world, and requirements for the development and conduct of foreign policy. Witnesses before the Committee were unanimous on two points: the importance of the Muslim world for Canadian foreign policy, and the need for care when considering foreign policy along these lines. The Committee agrees on both.

Specific recommendations arising from the Committee's visits throughout the Muslim world will be discussed in the regional chapters. The following outlines some of the main elements the Committee believes are necessary for a constructive overall Canadian approach to understanding developments in the diverse countries of the Muslim world, improving Canada's relations with those countries and strengthening the development and conduct of Canadian foreign policy in this area.

A number of recurring themes came through clearly during the Committee's hearings and travels, notably the need for increased education both at home and abroad, and for increased intercultural and interfaith dialogue. A number of specific mechanisms — many of which could come under the general rubric of "public diplomacy" — were also raised by witnesses, including economic and cultural ties; development assistance; support for civil society, democratization and addressing human rights; communications/media initiatives; and youth exchanges and parliamentary exchanges. All of these have some merit, but **Canada will reap the full benefit from these and other initiatives only after more fully engaging Canadian Muslims in the development and implementation of its — and their — foreign policy**.

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[89] Allan Gregg, "Bumpy Ride," *Macleans*, December 2003, p. 30.

The Implications of Diasporas and Foreign Policy

Even before the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the nature of international relations was undergoing important changes: there was a growing recognition of the importance of multiple identities, and a steady shift from relations based almost solely on governments to those that include and benefit from stronger links to civil society and between individuals.

An increasingly important element of modern international relations is the role of worldwide diasporas, which one observer has referred to as "globalization-from-below."[90] Professor Karim Karim of Carleton University noted before the Committee that "understanding the role of diasporas in the world today is vital for a fuller comprehension of international relations." As he explained:

> Diasporas have grown significantly in the west … Relatively accessible air travel and means of communication such as the Internet, satellite television, and the phone mean they can keep in touch with their global groups on a regular basis. The impact that this and other aspects of globalization have had on the role of national borders is strengthening the place of worldwide diasporas.
>
> Whereas governments view persons as subjects of specific jurisdictions, members of diasporas — and I would also add to the diasporas members such as those of transnational corporate elites, who are based in various countries for long periods — increasingly view themselves as cosmopolitan citizens. This does not necessarily mean they resist attachment to their countries of settlement, but they maintain a broader notion of the global self.
>
> Ties cut across national borders in intricate linkages that enable individuals to give and receive spiritual, social, economic, and cultural support …

In an observation that has particular importance in light of the global war against terror, he noted that "unfortunately, militants and terrorists also exploit these networks for destructive purposes. It is incumbent upon governments to be able to distinguish between the legitimate and highly beneficial connections that are the characteristics of all diasporas from the criminal activities of the few."[91] Finally, he noted that the unsatisfactory flow of information to the Canadian government in the cases of Maher Arar and Zahra Kazemi " … reflects partially the views of these Middle Eastern governments about the diasporas." He added that "it is clear that Canada will have to engage sooner rather than later in an international discussion about the implications of transnational diasporas and contemporary cosmopolitanism for foreign policy, immigration, citizenship and security issues." [92]

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[90] Karim Karim, "Canada's Relations with Countries of the Muslim World," Submission, October 2, 2003, citing Richard Falk.

[91] *Evidence*, Meeting 49 (1105).

According to Mr. Karim, "Diaspora is especially significant in Muslim contexts."[93] This point was also made to the Committee in New York by Columbia University historian Richard Bulliet. Since many of the democratic and other challenges facing Arab and other Muslim states involve conflict between moderate reformers and hardliners, there is reason to believe that Muslim diasporas in Canada and other countries in the West can play a key role in helping to resolve these struggles. In Bulliet's opinion, the fact that diaspora communities in the West are relatively well off, educated and used to dealing pluralist societies makes them one of several "edge" situations most likely over the longer term to help resolve the crisis of authority within Islam.[94] He told Committee members that while the problems of the Islamic world are most acute in the Middle East, in his opinion the likely source of change would be either in well-educated and well-off diaspora communities, or in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh or India. Likewise, noted British theologian Karen Armstrong told members in London that "Canada ... could be one of those places that could be a bridge between East and West ... [and] show that it is possible to live a vibrant, creative and intellectually and spiritually dynamic Muslim life in a Western country and put pressure on their own countries to reform."

Learning From European Experiences

As the Committee learned in France and the United Kingdom during the course of its study, the recent growth of large populations of European Muslims — Islam is now the second-largest religion in Europe — and a resulting backlash, have had implications not only for domestic politics, but also for the foreign policies of major European states such as France, the United Kingdom and Germany. The issue is making itself felt even at the level of the European Union. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has pointed out that there was a debate in the Intergovernmental Conference about whether the draft European constitution should include a statement acknowledging the Judaeo-Christian heritage of Europe.[95] Another debate involves the possible links between criticism of Israeli government policies and anti-Semitism. As one American expert noted in 2002," Europe's Muslims, so far, have not been very active in trying to influence Europe's foreign policy in regard to the Islamic world and issues of concern to the Muslims. Nevertheless, their mere presence has affected the attitudes and approaches of Europe's policymakers toward a number of key issues, notably the Arab-Israeli conflict."[96]

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[92] Ibid. (1110).

[93] Ibid. (1105).

[94] Richard Bulliet, *The Case For Islamo-Christian Civilization*, Columbia University Press, forthcoming, August 2004, Chapter 4.

[95] Foreign Secretary's Opening Remarks at Seminar on Faith and Foreign Policy, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, October 8, 2003.

France has the largest population of European Muslims with 4-5 million, mainly descended from North Africa or immigrants. French foreign policy continues to place special emphasis on relations with the Arab rather than the broader Muslim world. In Paris, Committee members saw at first hand the link between domestic and foreign policy as they visited the *Institut du monde arab*, a cultural and political project first proposed as a means of promoting a positive image of Arab countries and culture in the aftermath of the OPEC oil crises of the 1970s.

Yet the foreign policy implications of France's growing Muslim population have been overshadowed by domestic issues, many of which have revolved around the question of secularism. France's Muslim community has traditionally had no single structured leadership, but after several false starts, in 2003 the French government assisted French Muslims in establishing a new representative and autonomous Conseil francais du culte musulman, to advise on both technical question and issues of principle. (While in Paris the Committee met with the president of the Conseil, Dr. Dalil Boubaker, who is also Chancellor of the Mosquée de Paris) The most controversial debate has focused on the hijab or Muslim headscarf. In December 2003, the French government proposed a law outlawing all obvious signs of religious affiliation, including the hijab, in schools and public offices. Protests ensued both in France itself and in a number of Muslim majority states abroad. As *The Economist* noted in January 2004, the French government " ... wants to put right misunderstandings about the French secular state and the obligations of religious groups. Its position is certainly clear — but so might be the damage to relations with Muslims at home and abroad."[97]

The United Kingdom has a Muslim population of around 2 million, most of whom are descendents of immigrants from South Asia or immigrants. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw — over 25% of whose constituents are Muslim — noted in a speech delivered in Indonesia last year that "The size and importance of our Muslim communities is such that no British government —present or future — can afford to turn a blind eye to their domestic or international concerns. Britain's Muslims are preoccupied with the same domestic issues as all of our voters: decent schools, high standards in healthcare provision and a prosperous economy. But when it comes to international issues, they are particularly concerned about developments in the Middle East and North Africa, and South and South East Asia."[98]

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[96] See Shireen T. Hunter, "Conclusions and Outlook for European Islam," in Shireen T. Hunter ed., *Islam, Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural and Political Landscape*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, 2002, p. 275.

[97] "Veil of Tears," *The Economist*, January 17, 2004, p. 44.

[98] Jack Straw, "The United Kingdom and the Muslim World," Jakarta, January 9, 2003.

Even though the majority of Muslims in Britain are of South Asian rather than the Middle Eastern descent, Dr. Rima Khalaf of the United Nations Development Programme pointed out to Committee members in New York that the most important newspapers in the Arab world are now published in London. The country has also seen public extremism — notably that of Abu Hamza Al-Mazri, a radical cleric at the Finsbury Park Mosque until his dismissal in early 2003 — leading some wags to refer to the capital as "Londonistan."[99] Nevertheless, Canadian diplomats in London told members that there had been "a fair bit of shock" when two Muslims who grew up in the United Kingdom had committed suicide bombings in the Middle East in 2003. Many British Muslims and others also condemned the government's recent decision to join the United States in the invasion of Iraq. Sheik Dr. M. A. Zaki Badawi, the Chairman of the Imams and Mosques Council of England, and himself a former Imam of the Finsbury Park Mosque, told members in London that the few who preached intolerance in Britain were not qualified imams; Abu Hamza Al-Mazri was in fact an electrician. He added, however, that in the absence of both indigenous religious training in Britain and formal standards, anyone could call themselves a religious leader. He had therefore founded Muslim College — which has both male and female students — to train "home-grown" imams in Britain so these would no longer have to be imported from the Middle East and elsewhere; in addition he hoped to bring the key role of scholars in interpreting Islam into focus in the West.

In October 2003, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) launched a Multi Faith Week, designed to celebrate the United Kingdom's many different faiths and cultures. Events during the week included a seminar on faith and foreign policy. In his opening address, the Foreign Secretary noted that while British Muslims have the same concerns as other constituents about domestic issues, " ... when it comes to foreign policy, differences become more apparent." In a background document on faith groups and foreign policy, the FCO raised a number of important questions concerning the relationship between faith groups and foreign policy that apply equally to other countries. The document states:

> The FCO is comfortable making common cause with faith groups which share its values or approach. But we need to be aware of the potential difficulties. There are areas where the UK will be out of sympathy with, or even actively opposed to the agenda of faith groups. Their priorities may coincide with FCO priorities in some respects, but may clash with UK policy in areas such as: the role of contraception in disease prevention and population control in the developing world; the rights of women in Muslim majority countries; homosexuality; asylum/migration; and the definition of 'extremists' and 'terrorist' organisations.
>
> Faith communities can help the FCO to understand the world in all its complexity. They will only be able to do this effectively if they understand UK foreign policy in all its complexity. Dialogue is an over-used word, but

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[99] See Gordon Corera, "How Militant Islam Found a Home in London," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 2002.

> dialogue will be crucial in developing a mature relationship — one which can withstand serious moral or political disagreements.[100]

The Foreign Secretary noted that in order to convince faith communities that Britain's foreign policy was balanced and accommodating of religious beliefs, the government had to improve its efforts to reach out to faith communities. He added that "like policy-making in any other sphere from transport to law and order, our foreign policy will only benefit from exposure to rigorous public debate."[101]

Germany has a Muslim population of perhaps 3 million, almost two million of whom have Turkish citizenship, including several hundred thousand Kurds. This has had important domestic implications for issues such as citizenship. The ongoing debate over the possible admission of Turkey to the European Union has also underlined the links between domestic and foreign policy, with implications for policy on the EU itself, bilateral relations and issues such as arms sales.

In the aftermath of the September 2001 attacks, the German government has taken a number of steps to address the challenges of relations with the Muslim world, including the appointment of a Commissioner for Intercultural Dialogue/Dialogue with the Islamic World, who is responsible for the trans-departmental coordination of dialogue-based policy areas. The Commissioner is assisted in his work by a Task Force for Dialogue with the Islamic World, made up of a combination of senior officials and outside experts. The Task Force also has access to some 26 dialogue advisors — because of language and other requirements recruited mainly from outside the German foreign service — now posted at German missions abroad, particularly in the Islamic world.[102]

Engaging Canadian Muslims

The presence of Muslims in Canada is not new. Edmonton's Al Rashid Mosque, built in 1938, is the oldest in North America, and McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies is over 50 years old. Canada's Muslim population has grown dramatically in recent decades, however, and contrary to the situation in Europe or the United States, where the dominant model remains one of assimilation, Muslim and other witnesses praised Canada's policies of multiculturalism and pluralism, which have assisted in the development of what is in many ways a unique community. Among other attributes, Canada's Muslim community has a significant number of women leaders, and the Chairman of the Canadian Islamic Congress has been quoted as saying that "We are creating a new culture." [103] The Canadian Muslim community also encompasses a diversity of opinion and therefore lively debate. While Irshad Manji's controversial recent book *The Trouble With Islam: Wake-Up Call For Honesty and Change*[104] certainly does not reflect the views of the majority of Canadian Muslims, the fact that as a member of that community she felt free to voice her opinions speaks well of it.

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[100] United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "Working With Faith Groups".

[101] Foreign Secretary's Opening Remarks at Seminar on Faith and Foreign Policy, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, October 8, 2003.

[102] The Committee is grateful to the German Embassy in Ottawa for supplying this information.

In addition to Canada's lack of colonial history, policies such as multiculturalism and pluralism have helped strengthen this country's image throughout the Muslim world. While Canadian Muslims are playing an ever-greater role in all areas of national life, however — the Canadian Forces commissioned its first Muslim chaplain in December 2003 — a number of witnesses expressed at least a perception that much more needs to be done to engage Canadian Muslims in the development of public policy in a number of areas, including foreign policy.

Wahida Valiante of the Canadian Islamic Congress argued before the Committee that " ... although Muslims make up a significant minority in Canada, numbering about 650,000, they have had very little impact on Canadian domestic or foreign policy."[105] She noted that one reason for this has to do with the Muslim community itself. "What they lack here in Canada ... is a unified understanding of the political system and the importance of engaging politicians in proactive discussions on issues of national and international importance. This is a vital component of being citizens of a democratic society."

More specifically in terms of foreign policy, Mrs. Valiante observed: "There is some perception in the Muslim community that socio-political theories, such as the clash of civilizations and the prevalent anti-Islam bias in the media, have in some measure influenced Canada's foreign policy and direct dealings with the Islamic world. Nationally, many Muslims feel they cannot make a noticeable difference in Canada's foreign or domestic policies, especially concerning Palestine." She noted "the absence of any federal government initiative or commitment to promoting a better understanding of the Islamic world," pointing out that this could be rectified through the establishment of a Muslim affairs portfolio or department in Ottawa. More simply, she added that "Canadian Muslims are rarely invited to participate in policy discussions concerning issues of the Muslim world or to sit on committees that develop strategies and programs that affect Muslims in Canada and abroad." Mazen Chouaib agreed, pointing out that "Canadians of all walks of life have a role to play in devising our foreign policy."[106]

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[103] Bob Harvey, "Canadian Muslims Creating a New Culture," *Ottawa Citizen*, July 12, 2003.

[104] Irshad Manji, The Trouble With Islam: Wake-Up Call For Honesty and Change, Toronto, Random House Canada, 2003.

[105] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (0930).

[106] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1610).

Consultations in the development of foreign policy are not a panacea. However, it is obviously necessary to take action to address the perception that Canadian Muslim voices are not adequately listened to, by ensuring that they and others are fully consulted in the development of the country's foreign policy. Beyond simple transparency, proper and ongoing consultations will also ensure that Canada's foreign policy benefits from the unique knowledge and experiences of Muslim Canadians. Foreign Minister Bill Graham told an American audience in the fall of 2003 that "Each of our nations is being enriched by a growing Muslim population … our countries … share a similar concern for engaging moderate Muslim voices around the world, and we share extensive Muslim communities within our borders that can aid us in that task."[107] Ann Thomson of South Asia Partnership Canada was more specific, arguing that "in our relations with Muslim countries and communities overseas, we should draw on the knowledge and expertise of Canadian Muslim organizations. The Canadian government can work closely with progressive Muslim social justice organizations and support building of strong practical partnerships between them and organizations in Muslim majority and minority countries."[108]

Salim Mansur agreed, but added two important caveats which echoed those of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

> … for Canada to fully and successfully engage with the Muslim world, it also means engaging constructively and energetically with Canadians who are Muslims. This means being open to a diversity of opinion among Canadian Muslims, to recognize that since Islam is a universal faith, Muslims in Canada come from all points of the compass bringing different cultures and languages that contribute to the richness of the Canadian mosaic. But this should not mean the openness becomes a conduit of change in one direction, nor should Canadian tradition and history … be diluted in any way before the demands of any one segment of the multicultural Canadian family.[109]

The Committee agrees that it is vital to ensure that Canadian Muslims are fully consulted along with other groups in the ongoing development of Canadian foreign policy. Aside from demonstrating transparency, this will ensure that the country's foreign policy benefits from their unique knowledge and experiences, both in relations with the countries of the Muslim world and more generally.

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[107] Notes for an Address by the Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Chicago, November 20, 2003, p. 6.

[108] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1125)

[109] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (0920).

Elements of a Long-Term Approach

> *There are presently only four ways through which people around the world, and in the Muslim world in particular, are exposed to Canada: one, through political efforts such as UN roles or peacekeeping missions; two, cultural exchanges, including foreign students studying in Canada; three, commerce, including exports of Canadian entertainment; and four, aid. It's debatable which of these four is the most effective in promoting Canada and its values; however, it is clear that commercial ventures are at least the most profitable. In the long run, however, the most effective means of promoting Canada is through accepting foreign students for study in Canadian universities.*[110]
>
> Dr. Sheema Khan
> Council on American Islamic Relations (Canada)

Beyond the need for broad and ongoing consultation with Muslim and other Canadians in the development of foreign policy, the following are a number of key themes raised during the Committee's hearings and travels. A consideration of these themes will assist Canada in the development of a constructive approach to relations with the countries of the Muslim world. While the Committee's mandate does not extend to domestic issues, the near-unanimous calls from witnesses for increased generation and communication of knowledge at home and abroad, dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims, and a rethinking of security practices obviously have domestic as well as foreign policy implications.

Education and Dialogue

> *What we are now witnessing is a clash of ignorance, an ignorance that is mutual, longstanding, and to which the west and the Islamic world have been blind for decades at their great peril.*
>
> His Highness the Aga Khan

The recommendation most frequently made before the Committee was undoubtedly the need for increased education both at home and abroad, and a range of dialogue activities. In the opinion of the Canadian Islamic Congress:

> Canada's foreign policy towards the Muslim world should include clear directives to engage in dialogue with Muslim intellectuals and scholars here at home, as well as in Islamic countries, in order to accelerate the exchange of ideas, skills, knowledge, and experience that would facilitate the constructing or rebuilding of civil societies and democracies that embrace diversity, morality, and general equality.

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[110] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1135-40).

> There's much Canadians do not understand about Islam and Muslims, so public education is vital for promoting harmony, peace, and human rights. Through education, Canada's security concerns can be addressed by promoting social justice, both at home and abroad, and resolving conflicts using the principles and morals of natural justice, which are the best guarantees for achieving global security.[111]

In terms of education, as David Dewitt pointed out, "One educates in favour of progress, and education comes in many forms using many instruments."[112] Noah Feldman argued that: "Educating ourselves is crucial, because the kind of democracy that will emerge, if it is to emerge in the Muslim world, will not look like our democracy ... Education involves first of all, learning languages ... Second, it involves overcoming a fear of religion."[113]

While acknowledging the need, in cooperation with the provinces as necessary, for domestic education and dialogue activities, the more traditional foreign policy focus of assisting education abroad was also raised frequently both in Ottawa and during the Committee's travels abroad. Nazeer Ladhani argued that, after an emphasis on pluralism, the next recommendation of the Aga Khan Foundation Canada was "education, education, education." He added that " ... perhaps most important of all, we must focus on improving the quality of and access to education generally at all levels in the Muslim world. This must include improving education to foster the spirit of inquiry, encourage innovative thinking, and promote tolerance. In the end, replacing ignorance and hopelessness with knowledge, skills, and opportunity for men, and especially for women, is the best means of combating the poverty and isolation that too often leads to intolerance and extremism."[114] Senator Mobina Jaffer said that " ... the area where our country will be best able to leave its mark is the education of girls in Muslim countries." Then Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific David Kilgour spoke in September 2003 of the need to expand "support for education programs that provide alternatives to narrow-minded systems that perpetuate intolerance."[115]

As we shall see later, McGill University (Montreal) has a long history of academic exchanges in Indonesia that are widely admired in the region, and have now also been shown to indirectly help address poverty and other issues.[116] Tariq Ismael argued that " ... our universities have an international reputation that is basically similar to that of the Americans, without the American political baggage, if you will." He proposed an academic exchange focus with Iraq in particular, with the goal of establishing an international University in Baghdad.[117] As noted above, Dr. Sheema Khan argued that "in the long run … the most effective means of promoting Canada is through accepting foreign students for study in Canadian universities." She added "In the last few years, due to visa restrictions, the number of foreign graduate students seeking to study in the United States has declined considerably. Canada has the opportunity to fill that void, but it would require an investment in scholarship funding. We can impress upon foreign students our Canadian values of tolerance, fairness, pluralism and mutual respect, and thereby contribute towards building a better world."[118] Such policies are all the more valuable given the large and growing youth population in almost all Muslim societies.

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[111] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (0940).

[112] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1120).

[113] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 57 (1205).

[114] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1625).

[115] "From Tolerance to Understanding: Strengthening Canada's Relations with Muslim Communities in Asia-Pacific," Remarks by the Honourable David Kilgour, Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) to "Canada and Islam in Asia in the 21st Century" conference, Montreal, September 24, 2003.

[116] See "Impact Study Cooperation Between IAIN and McGill University, Impact on the Development and Modernization of Islam in Indonesia," IAIN, Jakarta, May 17, 2000, available on the Web site of the McGill Centre for Islamic Studies.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has recognized the need to explore in more depth relations between Canada and the Muslim world. Over the past several years, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development has sponsored a series of expert meetings on this topic, the recommendations of which were summarized by Suman Bhattacharyya. On the related issues of education and dialogue, he noted that

> to combat a lack of knowledge about Islam, Canada's education projects at home could focus on rectifying misconceptions about Islam, and should recognize the existence of debates within Islam... As well, Canada could play an important role in supporting education in Muslim communities, including the education of Muslim women of their rights within Islam and how rights can be used as tools of empowerment. Canadian educational institutions could play a useful role by continuing to support educational and cultural exchanges."[119]

Beyond education, which is a critical but obviously long-term solution, witnesses were clear on the need for increased dialogue at multiple levels. According to Raja Khouri, " … the cultural divide has to be bridged. I think the most critical thing we're dealing with today is that the cultural divide is growing. It used to be much better than this, but now it's growing … this is the biggest danger here, and that cultural divide needs to be overcome. And that can only happen through dialogue and education, education, education."[120]

Like education and the broader generation and communication of knowledge, dialogue can obviously come in many forms. In June 2003, Women

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[117] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1110).

[118] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1140).

[119] Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, *Canada and the Muslim World*, Summary Report from Expert Meetings, Ottawa, 2003, p. 12.

[120] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1210).

Engaging in Bridge Building held a one-day conference on Parliament Hill entitled "Diversity in Islam — Bridging the Gap." Witnesses made such suggestions as international conferences and the establishment of a lecture circuit for experts from throughout the Muslim world. The Committee was warmly welcomed in its visits throughout the Muslim world, and Professor Turgay pointed out that dialogue can also include parliamentary diplomacy. In his words, "Even the Muslims are trying to understand the Islamic world today. It's not very easy, it changes very often. Keeping in mind the diversity of the Muslim world, keeping in mind the vitality of Islam, and keeping in mind that it's going to be there for God knows how long, it's incumbent on us to make every effort to understand Islam. That involves hearings, that involves conferences, that involves a lot of travelling by the members of this committee, by the politicians."[121]

While recommendations to increase dialogue may seem to address process rather than substance, the Committee agrees with then Secretary of State for Asia Pacific David Kilgour, who argued in the fall of 2003 that "the objective of genuine dialogue is not necessarily to find agreement, but more importantly mutual respect."[122] Karen Armstrong noted simply that anything we could do to get a creative conversation going without sneers and slurs would be helpful. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade also jointly sponsored an international conference in Montreal in the fall of 2003 on the subject of Canada and Islam in Asia, and the Committee encourages it to continue work along these lines.

Canadian Values and Culture

Witnesses were clear in their opinion that in addition to promoting universal values such as human rights, such fundamental Canadian values as pluralism and multiculturalism were largely responsible for Canada's positive image and deeply respected in the Muslim world, and should remain at the heart of Canadian public diplomacy and other initiatives. Dr. Sheema Khan agreed that " … it's clear that our foreign policy should be distinctly Canadian, in harmony with our basic values of compassion, fairness, and justice." She added, however, that "contradictions between our words and our deeds will only sow mistrust."[123]

Arguing for a broad definition of the term "pluralism," Nazeer Ladhani of the Aga Khan Foundation Canada recommended that the Canadian government should "see pluralism as a key, strategic resource for Canada's foreign relations. An enhanced foreign policy focus on fostering pluralism — a fundamental value and defining component of Canadian culture — would enhance relations between

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[121] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1655).

[122] David Kilgour, Notes for an Address, Dinner with the Malaysian Community in Edmonton, October 17, 2003.

[123] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1135).

Canada and the Muslim world and, more generally, increase security and prosperity in Canada and around the world."[124] He later added that "we need to identify and support institutions and initiatives that can help to communicate Canadian values, interests, and experiences to the Muslim world ... There are many strong potential partners in Canada and within civil society institutions of the Muslim world to connect and communicate with Muslim people."[125]

Mazen Chouaib pointed out that, "the promotion of Canadian culture and values is a key element in Canadian foreign policy, yet there is an absence of significant developments in this area, despite the opportunities that exist." In particular, he noted that other countries such as France and the United Kingdom make significant use of cultural centres in the Middle East, which are "a pragmatic tool for better relations and comprehension of each other."[126] While in Paris, Committee members held their meetings in the Canadian Cultural Centre, and, as we shall see later, members heard at least one suggestion for the creation of a new such centre in the Middle East.

Supporting Civil Society and Democratization

Canadian foreign policy has long recognized the importance of supporting civil societies abroad, among other things as a key element of democratization. Such a process is a long-term one, of course, and Nazeer Ladhani warned that it must go beyond the simple trappings of elections. David Dewitt noted that such support could take many forms: "When opportunities to promote and especially to assist peoples in these countries in their pursuit of reformist agendas leading toward democratic politics arise, we should be prepared to invest in various ways ... This might be in security sector reform, trade liberalization, education, or, in particular, capacity building of the civic institutions in these countries. It should mean our interest in good governance, transparency, and a reduction in violence, things that CIDA once had on its agenda."[127]

Gwynne Dyer told members in London that while it was not the West's job to export democracy anywhere, the best contribution Canada could make to "common human values" would be to support Muslim human rights initiatives and civil society. Raja Khouri recommended that " ... Canada should lead an effort in the West to provide economic trade and development incentives to governments in the Muslim world that focus on reform and democratization and open up their systems and institutions. By the same token, governments that do not reform should not receive any arms or economic assistance."[128] Ann Thomson argued that "active and democratic civil societies serve as the DNA of pluralism, tolerance, and cooperation. Canada needs to support people structure more than infrastructure."[129]

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[124] Aga Khan Foundation Canada, Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Study on Canada's Relations with the Countries in the Muslim World," May 7, 2003, p. 9-10. In October 2002 the Aga Khan announced the intention of establishing, with the collaboration of the Government of Canada, a secular, nondenominational and bilingual internationally focused Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa to promote pluralism as a global ethic and practice. See *Global Centre for Pluralism — Update*, Aga Khan Foundation Canada, March 9, 2004.

[125] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1625).

[126] Ibid. (1555).

[127] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1115).

While many witnesses agreed that Canada should strongly support civil society in the countries of the Muslim world, several also warned of the need to avoid the impression that we are attempting to influence what remain essentially domestic debates. According to Uner Turgay, "The Canadian example of civil society is very much in demand in the Muslim world. That can be accomplished by exchange programs. And unions are important. They can train union people. We'll educate some of the organizations by inviting them here for short-term visits or sending our people there. It's very important, I think."[130] He added, however:

> ... I think direct, obvious support for some of the liberal Islamic organizations is perhaps not the wisest thing. Again ... I consider that it is doing a very fine job with small projects that bring the local people closer to the west, that attention that we can show towards their Islamic sensitivities. It's tough. It's hard for me to answer ...
>
> On the other hand, if there is a civil group over there arguing against the death penalty, I think you can support that. I don't see anything wrong with that. We must not appear as if we are really meddling, yet we have to keep some of our own principles and stand by them and argue with them. We really have to.[131]

Addressing Terrorism and Security

All witnesses agreed on the need to condemn terrorism and the death of innocent civilians, although Raja Khouri of the Canadian Arab Federation and others argued that Canada must see even suicide attacks within a broader political context. At the domestic level, while there are obviously Muslims and others in Canada who support the use of terror, the Committee agrees with the vast majority of its witnesses that these represent a very small minority. However, the Committee accepts the warning of former CSIS director Reid Morden against complacency in this area, and that of Salim Mansur against political correctness.

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[128] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1120).

[129] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1125).

[130] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1705).

[131] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1250).

Beyond suggestions that the government do more of some things to properly represent and protect its Muslim citizens, a number of witnesses argued that it must also do less of others, particularly in the areas of security and immigration. According to Raja Khouri, "September 11 and the security agenda that has taken over since then have essentially separated our communities from the rest of Canadians, first of all through guilt by association and the mere suspicion of Arabs and Muslims following what happened on September 11, and then through the subsequent legislation of Bill C-36 and the current Bill C-18, lawful access, etc., and a public agenda that has put security ahead of human and civil rights in this country."[132] He noted that:

> ... Canada must also educate its own institutions and public about the Muslim world, its culture, and politics. Canadian political institutions have demonstrated a superficial and stereotypical understanding of Canadian Arabs and Muslims, as evident in the ignorant, clumsy, and often offensive way security agencies have treated them since September 11, 2001. Indeed, the immigration and solicitor general departments' actions toward our communities have often been perceived as hostile, and the justice department's attitude nothing short of indifferent ...
>
> For Canada to improve its relations with countries of the Muslim world, it must first get its own house in order by understanding, listening to, and protecting the rights of Arabs and Muslims within it. All practices of racial profiling must cease, and the security agenda must not be allowed to step roughshod over the country's commitment to multiculturalism and human rights.[133]

All Canadians agree with the need to continue the global fight against terrorism, and most would probably agree that this can best be done through even closer intelligence, security and other cooperation around the world. Given valid criticisms of some of the aspects of the fight against terrorism, however, the Committee believes it neither complacent nor politically correct to agree with veteran Canadian diplomat Ferry de Kerckhove, a former high commissioner to Pakistan and ambassador to Indonesia, who argued in a personal capacity in the fall of 2003 that "There is clearly a need for a new security paradigm to fight terrorism. Muslim communities in western countries should be involved in devising it or, at least, being brought into the tent where some of the paradigm's broad lines are being worked on, both to reassure them that it is not an anti-Islamic paradigm and to get any insight of use from the communities to fight Islamist terrorism."[134] The Committee therefore welcomes the forthcoming establishment of a parliamentary Standing Committee on National Security as it recommended in December 2002, and the public inquiry into the case of Maher Arar. Both these initiatives should contribute to stronger public policy in this area, including the relations between consular services abroad and security agencies at home.

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[132] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1155)

[133] Ibid. (1125).

Addressing Human Rights

Witnesses before the Committee — particularly Canadian Muslims — were clear in their demand that the Canadian government speak up strongly against all human rights abuses, including those by majority Muslim states. As Raja Khouri put it,

> ... we must uphold human rights equally for all people and all places. Human rights are universal and indivisible. It's more than a motto to brandish at conferences and international fora. We need to advocate for human rights in places like Chechnya, China, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt. We may have to allow our interests to suffer in the short term by refusing to accommodate "friendly" regimes, so that we will gain in the long term by helping democracy and stability take hold.[135]

Dr. Sheema Khan of the Council on American-Islamic Relations Canada agreed, adding that "We have to speak out when people who stand up for basic human rights, which are universal, are being threatened. I think we have to take a stronger stand on that."[136] As cited above, Professor Uner Turgay argued that some Muslim governments hide behind Islam and cultural relativism, saying " ... take Saudi Arabia again, which does that physical punishment — cutting off hands, chopping off heads. We have to be critical of that. It doesn't matter what the cost is. These are our very basic values." [137] The Committee agrees that Canada must continue to speak out strongly against all human rights abuses, including those committed by Muslim majority states.

Emphasizing the Rights of Women and Minorities

Beyond a general need to support universal human rights, many of the witnesses and groups the Committee met in Canada and throughout the Muslim world spoke of the particular challenges facing women, and also minorities. Noah

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[134] See Ferry de Kerckhove "Islam and multiculturalism: The challenge of successful integration," edited version of a paper presented to the conference on Canada and Islam in Asia in the 21st Century, Montreal, September 24-26, 2003.

[135] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1120).

[136] Ibid. (1150).

[137] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1250).

Feldman has pointed out that while there is little in Islam itself which justifies the second-class treatment of either women or minorities in Islamic states, such treatment does exist in practice, although the same can be said of many non-Islamic states as well.[138] In her presentation before the committee, Senator Mobina Jaffer highlighted the importance of the rights of women and minorities — particularly the importance of education. She added that, as the Committee travelled throughout the Muslim world, "I respectfully suggest that you ask the same questions of women and minorities in these countries, as you will help our country and others in developing foreign policies that will ensure enduring partnerships."[139]

The issue of women's rights was the subject of extensive discussion in meetings in the Middle East and in Asia, where members met with women parliamentarians, prominent activists, women's rights organizations, academics, journalists and others. As noted above, Senator Jaffer stressed the importance of women's rights — and particularly the importance of education in liberating women — arguing that Canada should continue to assist this through CIDA and other programs. As noted in Part 1, Rights and Democracy also spoke to the Committee of its work on women's rights in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and there are concrete and inexpensive ways that Canada can continue to help address the issue of women's rights.

In terms of minorities, Iris Almeida of Rights and Democracy told the Committee that " … the problem of minorities has become one of the main phenomena that can help us understand and manage diversity and democratic pluralism in many countries."[140] While minority issues were raised in many countries, as noted above and later, they took on a particular importance during the Committee's visit to India, where the minority Muslim population is one of the largest in the world.

Minority rights must also be protected at home, however, and, as noted above, a number of Canadian Muslims argued before the Committee that they have been discriminated against by government security policies after September 11, 2001. Senator Jaffer made the same point in a speech to the Senate in February 2004 on the second reading of the *Public Safety Act 2002*. Arguing the need to protect "people who look like me," she added that:

> September 11 was a terrible tragedy. It changed our country and the world, as we knew them. We need to respond. I do not dispute that. We need to ensure that our government had the powers it needed … It was our duty and we responded. However … we must not forget … that we have a duty

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[138] Noah Feldman, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux New York, 2003, p. 62-68.

[139] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1140).

[140] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 3, February 25, 2004.

> to ensure the civil liberties and freedoms of all our citizens, and that all our citizens are protected. That is fundamental to our Canadian system and to our security as a nation.[141]

Protecting Canadians and Strengthening Diplomatic Advocacy

Thousands of Canadians have unfortunately been imprisoned in other countries over the years, and almost three-quarters of the nearly 3,000 currently imprisoned are in the United States due to drug-related offences. Over the past year, however, high-profile cases such as that of Maher Arar, Zahra Kazemi and William Sampson, have taught Canadians that beyond condemning human rights abuses in general, there is a need for stronger action to protect Canadians unlawfully imprisoned, tortured and even possibly murdered abroad. In the fall of 2003, following several hearings on the broader question of Canadians detained abroad which focused largely on the case of Maher Arar, the majority of the Committee passed a resolution calling for a public inquiry into the Maher Arar case.[142] It therefore welcomes the government's announcement in early 2004 that such an inquiry will be held as an important step in learning lessons for the future. The specific cases of Zahra Kazemi in Iran and William Sampson in Saudi Arabia will be discussed in later country sections.

After hearing from the Minister of Foreign Affairs and senior officials on this subject last year, the Committee agrees with the need to adopt a more aggressive strategy of *effective* rather than "soft" or "hard" diplomacy for the protection of all Canadians. Before his elevation to cabinet, former Committee member the Honourable Irwin Cotler published a list of 10 "rules of diplomatic advocacy" the Canadian government should follow to ensure better protection for Canadians held abroad, arguing that "the time has come for Canada to make it clear that we will not sit idly by while our citizens are illegally detained, imprisoned, abused and tortured."[143] The Committee also welcomes the fact that in December 2003 the government appointed a new parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs with special emphasis on Canadians abroad. Mr. Cotler's tenth recommendation was that " Parliament should be much more engaged in the defence and protection of our citizens unlawfully detained abroad." The Committee agrees, and in addition to the hearings it has already held, will continue to focus on these important issues.

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[141] Debates of the Senate, 3rd Session, 37th Parliament, Volume 141, Issue 17, February 26, 2004 (1450).

[142] Overall, the Committee held at least four substantial meetings on these cases, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Meeting No. 54, November 4, 2003); the Solicitor General of Canada (Meeting No. 50, October 7, 2003); senior officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of the Solicitor General/RCMP (Meeting No.46, September 25, 2003 and accompanying their ministers); Monia Mazigh (the wife of Maher Arar) (Meeting No. 46, September 25, 2003); and William Sampson (Meeting No. 57, November 6, 2003).

[143] Irwin Cotler, "The 10 Rules of Diplomatic Advocacy, *The National Post*, August 19, 2003.

Public Diplomacy and Media

A number of the suggestions raised during the Committee's study could be considered elements of "public diplomacy." Reid Morden, who is not only a former director of CSIS, but also a former deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, explained this term as follows: "it's not just the doing, it's letting people know what you're doing."[144] More formally, the Advisory Committee on Public Diplomacy appointed by the U.S. Congress argued in its 2003 report *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World*, that "public diplomacy is the promotion of the national interest by informing, engaging and influencing people around the world."[145]

In recent years, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has recognized the increased need for public diplomacy, which Jean-Phillipe Tachdjian of the Canadian Embassy in Egypt noted in a personal submission to the Committee "is a wide field which includes many facets including advocacy, media relations, education promotion and wider cultural affairs." Noting that the latter includes both telling people " … who Canadians are (our own unique identity) and what we are not (i.e. not Americans and not Europeans)," he argued that resources currently devoted to these functions in Egypt and elsewhere are inadequate.[146] Likewise political scientist Denis Stairs recently argued that "the growing requirement for 'public diplomacy' cannot be adequately met without more staff."[147]

A number of witnesses in Asia argued that Canada should consider establishing a satellite television presence to present Canadian news or other Canadian content. Likewise, in a recent overview of Canada's relations with the Asia-Pacific region, veteran diplomat Daryl Copeland suggested that the government "develop a satellite television presence — Canada's absence in that field is crippling."[148] When questioned on this subject by a member of the Committee in the fall of 2003, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation President and CEO Robert Rabinovich replied that " … there's no question that there is a demand out there for that service. We would very much like to consider expansion and development of a foreign service television channel around the world, because [Radio Canada International] is only radio." When asked about the cost, he replied that "it's relatively doable, especially if we could attract a couple more public sector partners such as the Australians and a couple of others to come in with us ... It's not expensive per se, but it's not cheap, and it would take a commitment of funds and a desire by government that we move in that direction."[149]

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[144] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (1040).

[145] *Changing Minds, Winning Peace: A New Strategic Direction for US Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World*, Report of the Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World, Washington, October 2003, p. 13.

[146] Jean-Phillipe Tachdjian, "The Projection of Canadian Culture and Values in the Arab World: A Strategy Paper."

[147] Denis Stairs, "Challenges and Opportunities for Canadian Foreign Policy in the Paul Martin Era," *International Journal*, Volume LVIII, No. 4, 2003, p. 501 (footnote 9).

[148] Daryl Copeland, "Diversifying Canada's Dependence: Look East," *Asian Perspective*, Volume 27, No. 4, 2003, p. 289.

Strengthening Foreign Policy Instruments

While the preceding principles will allow Canada to review and strengthen key aspects of its foreign policy that touch on relations with the countries of the Muslim world, Professor Syed Serajul Islam recommended the government "set up an interdepartmental council to look into Canada's relations with the Muslim world and recommend steps to be taken in this regard."[150]

More generally, the Committee's hearings once again highlighted a number of areas in which Canada must re-examine the tools through which it will deliver this policy — the so-called "three Ds and T" of defence, development, diplomacy, and trade.[151] As David Dewitt argued "... particularly in defence and in CIDA and in our development politics, we need reconsideration of our capacities. Capabilities in all three sectors need to be enhanced and refocused. If we can't do everything, we need to choose what, when, where, and how we wish to invest our scarce resources and our leverage, and pursue track-two diplomacy in this area where we can contribute."[152] A number of witnesses spoke of CIDA programs and resources, and former ambassador Michael Bell noted that in the case of Israel and Palestine DFAIT's Human Security Fund had been "very effective." Uner Turgay added that "... the missions have exchange program funds, which are very limited, by the way, they are desperately in need of more funds, both locally initiated fund and exchange funds."[153] While resources will be only one aspect of the re-examination of Canadian foreign policy instruments, as always they will loom large; as the Committee noted last year in its contribution to the Foreign Policy Dialogue, "Resources are not a substitute for policy, yet policy without adequate resources cannot achieve either its goals or its potential."[154]

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[149] *Evidence*, House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, October 28, 2003 (1140-45). Mr. Rabinovich gave a similar answer to members of the Senate Standing Committee on Transportation and Communications on October 23, 2003.

[150] Syed Serajul Islam, Submission.

[151] Stairs, p. 499.

[152] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1120).

[153] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1705).

[154] Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *A Contribution to the Foreign Policy Dialogue*, May 2003, p. 4.

Canadian diplomats remain the front-line deliverers of Canada's foreign policy, and the Committee reiterates the need to compensate them adequately for this task. The diversity of the Muslim world also emphasizes the need to increase the number of Foreign Service officers speaking such languages as Arabic, both by recruiting native speakers and increasing language training.

While it is necessary to ensure that DFAIT headquarters is adequately resourced, it is Canadian missions in the Muslim world and elsewhere that on a day-to-day basis explain the world to Ottawa, and Ottawa to the world. Recognizing the importance of adequate diplomatic representation, the Canadian government has recently agreed with the Committee's recommendation to increase Canadian representation in the United States. Likewise, as the Canadian government develops a comprehensive approach to relations with the countries of the Muslim world, it will no doubt need to increase Canadian diplomatic resources in key regions and countries.

The September 2001 attacks and the first two years of the war on terrorism have exposed common weaknesses in Western countries related both to intelligence capabilities in general and the lack of language capabilities in particular. The Canadian government increased the resources available to Canada's intelligence community in the 2002 federal budget, which in turn allowed an increase in capabilities. At least one veteran Canadian observer in Southeast Asia, however, argued that the new geopolitical realities both there and globally required the establishment of a Canadian foreign intelligence service. While most witnesses would probably not go this far, their cumulative descriptions of the complexity of the Muslim world lead to the conclusion that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade must take a proactive approach and ensure it has an independent assessment capability in Ottawa to deal effectively with the information it receives from multiple sources.[155]

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Government of Canada must ensure a proper understanding of the complexities of the diverse countries of the Muslim world and develop a constructive long-term approach toward them. In particular, the Committee is convinced that there cannot be genuine democratic progress without a serious process of increasing equality for women — economic, social, and political equality — in law and in practice.

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[155] According to Denis Stairs, "one of Canada's most dangerous vulnerabilities in international politico-security affairs is the fact that it is so dependent on the United States as a source of intelligence in relation to issues arising, for example, in areas like the Middle East. Having confidence in our own judgment requires confidence that we know what is really going on." See Stairs, p. 501 (footnote 10).

As part of this constructive approach, the Government should:

- ensure full consultation with a broad range of groups, including Muslim groups, in the ongoing development of its foreign policy;
- place greater emphasis on generating and communicating knowledge at home and abroad; support secular education abroad which upholds human rights and individual freedoms; and, noting the example of McGill University's successful program in Indonesia, in cooperation with the provinces as necessary, encourage other Canadian educational institutions to establish similar programs in Muslim countries;
- continue to support intercultural and interfaith dialogue;
- in cooperation with the provinces as necessary, expand student and other exchange programs;
- emphasize values such as pluralism and multiculturalism, and encourage the adoption of universal human rights values and freedoms such as freedom of speech, religion, association, enterprise and ownership of property;
- continue to support civil society and democratization throughout the Muslim world and elsewhere;
- continue to strongly condemn all human rights abuses;
- place even greater emphasis on the need for gender equality and women's rights;
- speak out strongly in defence of minority rights, including minority religious communities, and encourage their full participation in the national affairs of their countries;
- pursue a more aggressive strategy for the protection of Canadians detained abroad;
- strongly consider supporting the idea of establishing a Canadian news service televised by satellite; and
- ensure adequate resources for enhanced linguistic and analysis capabilities within the Canadian government, and consider the establishment of a mechanism within the

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to coordinate dialogue activities with the countries of the Muslim world.

PART III: CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH MUSLIM COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN NORTH AFRICA

Regional Overview

> *The absence of a credible political life in most parts of the [Middle East and North Africa] region, while not necessarily bound to produce violent conflict, is intimately connected to a host of questions that affect its longer-term stability:*
>
> - *Ineffective political representation, popular participation and government responsiveness often translate into inadequate mechanisms to express and channel public discontent, creating the potential for extra-institutional protests. These may, in turn, take on more violent forms, especially at a time when regional developments (in the Israeli-Palestinian theatre and in Iraq) have polarised and radicalised public opinion.*
>
> - *In the long run, the lack of genuine public accountability and transparency hampers sound economic development. While transparency and accountability are by no means a guarantee against corruption, their absence virtually ensures it. Also, without public participation, governments are likely to be more receptive to demands for economic reform emanating from the international community than from their own citizens. As a result, policy-makers risk taking insufficient account of the social and political impact of their decisions.*
>
> - *Weakened political legitimacy and economic under-development undermine the Arab states' ability to play an effective part on the regional scene at a time of crisis when their constructive and creative leadership is more necessary than ever.*
>
> - *The deficit of democratic representation may be a direct source of conflict, as in the case of Algeria.*
>
> *Addressing this question is the governments' responsibility, but not theirs alone. Too often, opposition parties and civil society have contented themselves with vacuous slogans and unrealistic proposals that do not resonate with the people and further undermine the credibility of political action.*
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> – International Crisis Group, *Middle East Briefing*[156]

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[156] Introduction to "The Challenge of Political Reform: Egypt after the Iraq War", Cairo/Brussels, September 30, 2003, p. 1.

Over a decade ago, the noted Egyptian human rights activist Saad Ibrahim, subsequently jailed and released after international pressure, wrote that: "During the last 25 years, Arab countries have experienced a number of major crises leading to the erosion of the legitimacy of their ruling elites ... [yet] the durability of the Arab world's authoritarian regimes remains striking."[157] With the exception of Turkey, democracy has still not made much headway within the wider Arab and Muslim Middle East and there are major human rights problems in virtually all countries of the region. The longer-term consequences of the overthrow of dictatorial regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq by external military force are as yet difficult to judge. The threat of terrorism overhangs the region, as does the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Prospects for a resolution of the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict also appear at best uncertain. A peaceful, prosperous and democratic Middle East remains more hope than reality.

Interlinked with the political and security challenges are deep-seated problems of social development. Two groundbreaking reports on the Arab world by Arab analysts working under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have exposed a "poverty of capabilities and poverty of opportunities [that] have their roots in three deficits: freedom, women's empowerment, and knowledge."[158] Other reports document the strains arising from a combination of youthful populations[159], growing unemployment, stagnant or declining per capita incomes, and little progress on poverty reduction despite the concentrations of wealth in oil-exporting countries.[160] In remarks to the Committee, Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa acknowledged these societal deficiencies and suggested that poverty be given an equal priority with terrorism on the international agenda.[161]

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[157] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Special Report: Crises, Elites, and Democratization in the Arab World," *Middle East Journal*, 47:2, Spring 1993, p. 292. For a useful survey of the current situation that begins with a provocative citation from Ibrahim on democratization prospects in the Middle East, see Kenneth Jost and Benton Ives-Halpern, "Democracy in the Arab World", *CQ Researcher*, 14:4, January 30, 2004, p. 73-100 Another challenging perspective is Larbi Sadiki, *The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-Discourses*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002.

[158] United Nations Development Program, *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*, New York, 2002, Executive Summary. A second volume was published by the UNDP in October 2003, *Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society*. (Both can be accessed at: http://www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr.) Although the Committee was unable to meet in Cairo with Dr. Nader Fergany, a lead author of both reports, Committee members did discuss the findings of the inaugural report in New York with Dr. Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, a former deputy prime minister of Jordan who is UN Assistant Secretary General and Regional Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States. See also, "Special Report, Arab Development: Self-doomed to failure", *The Economist*, July 6, 2002, p. 24-26.

[159] The total population of the Arab region is expected to double from the current 290 million people in the next 30 years.

Many witnesses would also agree with the *Arab Human Development Report* authors that a transition to democratic, accountable governance is an imperative for achieving progress within the region and for improving external relations. As another recent UN-sponsored study states: "Democratization is part and parcel of any serious strategy to liberate the region from the scourges of war and injustice and from the highly politicized interpretation and distortion of religious teachings that, in their original meaning, are meant to encourage, not undermine, the construction of tolerant, just, and inclusive societies."[162] But how to effect and support such transitions in ways that empower indigenous populations and that are sustainably democratic? The same study acknowledges that: "Transitions to democracy can be violent — more violent than the structural violence that is ever-present under authoritarian rule." Yet it also concludes that only "gradual reform processes will be successful in the end."[163] Canadian Middle East scholar Janice Stein has also argued that "those who are impatient to build democracy, who are champing at the bit, may hurt those they most want to help and damage the prospects for the 'made at home' political change that is the precondition for development and peace."[164]

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[160] See *Trade, Investment, and Development in the Middle East and North Africa*, The World Bank, Washington D.C., July 2003, and *The Arab World Competitiveness Report 2002-2003*, World Economic Forum, New York, 2003. The World Bank report notes that Arab countries will have to accommodate 4.2 million new entrants to the labour force each year through 2010, double the number in the previous two decades and double the rate of labour force growth in other developing countries. The World Competitiveness report estimates that of the region's labour force, 15% (12 million people) are currently unemployed. This report's studies also point to problems in the quality and efficiency of private investment in the region, and to the slowdown in the growth process as accounting for the fact that "the distribution of income in the last two decades has not improved much, and little progress has been made in poverty reduction". At the other end of the scale, it is estimated that the oil-rich Gulf states have approximately 185,000 millionaires possessing over $700 billion, much of which has been invested abroad and until recently mainly in the United States and other Western countries.

[161] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 48 (1635).

[162] Albrecht Schnabel, "A rough journey: Nascent democratization in the Middle East", in Amin Saikal and Albrecht Schnabel, eds., *Democratization in the Middle East: Experiences, struggles, challenges*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2003, p. 3.

[163] Ibid., p. 20.

[164] Janice Gross Stein, "Imposing Democracy in the Middle East?", *Queen's Quarterly*, 110:1, Spring 2003, p. 19. See also Amy Hawthorne, "Can the United States Promote Democracy in the Middle East?", *Current* History, January 2003, p. 21-26, and Thomas Carothers, "Is Gradualism Possible? Choosing the Strategy for Promoting Democracy in the Middle East", Middle East Series Working Paper No. 39, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., June 2003.

The nature and pace of desirable democratic transitions, along with the efficacy of existing Western democracy promotion activities, are clearly matters of dispute. The many obstacles to political and other reforms in the region are all too apparent, however. Among the main challenges identified in the UN volume are: "Islamic fundamentalism; the negative role of external great powers; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the legacy of a long history of violence; and clashes between western and local/regional political and spiritual norms and values."[165] Many proposals have been put forward for policy approaches to support democratic change. For example, one U.S. study calls for:

> ... sustained, high-level pressure on Arab states to respect political and civil rights and to create or widen genuine political space; clear, consistent pressure on Arab states to carry out pro-democratic institutional, legal, and constitutional changes; and increased democracy aid that bolsters democracy activists, engages seriously with the challenge of political party development, nurtures efforts to develop the rule of law, supports serious proponents of pro-democratic institutional reforms, and supports a growing range of civil society actors, including moderate Islamists.[166]

Western governments appear to be committed to a policy of democratic change in the region, at least in their declared intentions. The UK Government's strategic agenda, cited earlier in Part I, includes "serious effort to support peaceful political and social reform in the Arab world".[167] U.S. President Bush's speech to the National Endowment for Democracy on November 6, 2003 affirmed that "sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe ... Therefore, the

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[165] Schnabel p. 3. A recent conference report offers another list of reform hurdles: "absence of political will on the part of those in authority; a resistance to introduce measures that may appear as compliance with external pressure and a Western 'democratisation agenda'; fear of the perceived destabilising consequences of promoting pluralism; inertia or lethargy on the part of those holding power; weak and divided opposition parties, without charismatic leadership; the absence of public pressure, with little political consciousness developed among the population; and weak or barely-existent civil society organizations." ("Political, Economic and Social Reform in the Arab World", Wilton Park Conference: WP708, March 31- April 3, 2003, accessed at http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk.)

[166] Marina Ottaway, Thomas Carothers, Amy Hawthorne, Daniel Brumberg, "Democratic Mirage in the Middle East", Policy Brief, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., October 2002, p. 5-7. The authors contend that the hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S. spending on democracy programs in the Middle East during the past decade has had little impact and therefore needs to be revamped along these lines. See also Marina Ottaway, "Promoting Democracy in the Middle East: The Problem of U.S. Credibility", Middle East Series Working Paper No. 35, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2003; Daniel Brumberg, "Liberalization versus Democracy: Understanding Arab Political Reform", Working Paper No. 37, Carnegie Endowment, May 2003; monthly issues of the Carnegie Endowment's *Arab Reform Bulletin* (accessible at: http://www.ceip.org), and Larry Diamond, Marc Plattner and Daniel Brumberg, eds., *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*, Johns Hopkins University Press, September 2003.

[167] *UK International Priorities*, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom, December 2003, p. 15.

United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East."[168] We referred in Part I to proposals being developed by the U.S. for a "Greater Middle East" initiative, to be discussed at the June 2004 G8 Summit, that would promote an ambitious agenda for democratic reforms, including in such areas as women's rights.[169]

While accepting the imperative for Arab political reforms and applauding pro-democracy sentiments, many worry about their application. As one commentary put it: "the creation of a liberal, democratic order in the Arab world is in America's own long-term interest. But there is a fine distinction — and a world of difference — between a policy of advocating democracy and a policy of imposing it. Apart from being questionable in principle ... any crude attempt to impose democracy on the Arabs is liable to backfire in practice."[170] Observes Michael Bell, a former Canadian ambassador to Egypt and Jordan as well as to Israel and the Palestinian territories — "If we want to be effective, we have to accept that the Middle East is rife with complexities, and there will be few shortcuts."[171]

Where does Canada fit in to this evolving regional picture? Witnesses before the Committee were virtually unanimous that Canada has a positive image in the region and that this good will, free of imperial baggage, is an important asset with unrealized potential. Mazen Chouaib of the National Council on Canada-Arab relations argued that "the gate of the Arab world has been open to Canada" but we seem to be slow to reciprocate Arab interest in Canada, observing that in his frequent travels in the region "I was questioned about our apparent lack of interest in developing closer trade, political, and cultural relations. I was also asked about our ability to manage our relationship with the United States. Above all, there was serious interest in understanding Canadian models of governance which in their opinion are behind our successful multiculturalism, which they really desire. ... We have the capacity, talent, knowledge, and great experience to provide this model for a better world".[172]

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[168] "President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East: Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy", Washington D.C., November 6, 2003 (accessed on the NED's Web site at http://www.ned.org). See also, Carl Gershman, "A Democracy Strategy for the Middle East", Remarks delivered by the President of the National Endowment for Democracy, Athens, December 12, 2003; Joshua Muravchik, "Bringing Democracy to the Arab World", *Current History*, January 2004, p. 8-10.

[169] The proposals aroused strong negative reaction in Arab countries after a draft U.S. Working Paper for G8 officials on a "G8 Middle East Partnership" was published in February 2004 in the Arabic newspaper *Dar al Hayat* (accessed at http://english.daralhayat.com/Spec/02-2004/Article-20040213-ac40bdaf-c0a8-01ed-004e-5e7ac897d678/story.html). There are indications that the initiative may be scaled back prior to the June G8 summit. (See Steven Weisman, "U.S. Muffles Sweeping Call to Democracy in Mideast", *The New York Times*, March 12, 2004; and for critical commentary David Ignatius, "Real Arab Reform", *The Washington Post*, March 12, 2004; Brian Whitaker, "Beware Instant Democracy", *The Guardian*, March 15, 2004.)

[170] "They say we're getting a democracy", *The Economist*, November 15, 2003, p. 9. Another recent assessment cautions that: "The identification of democracy and women's rights leads to sinister interpretations and unintended consequences in the Arab world." (Marina Ottaway, *Women's Rights and Democracy in the Arab World*, Middle East Series No. 42, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 2004, p. 11.) According to former U.S. national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski: "The transformation of the Middle East will be a more complex undertaking than the restoration of postwar Europe." ("The Wrong Way to Sell Democratization to the Arab World", *The New York Times*, March 8, 2004.)

[171] Michael Bell, "Middle East Diplomacy: You can't force democracy", *The Globe and Mail*, March 12, 2004, p. A13.

Chouaib pointed to several deficiencies compared to other Western countries that limit a more visible Canadian presence and role:

> In Canada we have very few research and academic institutions that are committed to understanding the region and its complexity. If any exist, they tend to be concerned more about economic survival than research excellence ... We need to invest research money, and we need to open diplomatic and consular services in Arab countries and not rely on foreign agencies and institutions to provide us with the information. For example, the French, British, and other Europeans have cultural centres in almost every country in the region. These institutions give them the advantage of understanding currents, trends, and social developments that are taking place. As well, these centres operate as educational tools for the host peoples about their guests. French cultural centres are famous for providing French language classes, scholarships, movies, and other educational tools to foster people-to-people relations. It is a pragmatic tool for better relations and comprehension of each other. The promotion of Canadian culture and values is a key element in Canadian foreign policy, yet there is an absence of significant developments in this area, despite the opportunities that exist.[173]

Canada does have development assistance programs in the region, notably in Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Territories where Canada has also been active on refugee issues. Assistance through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and its partners has addressed areas such as poverty reduction, basic education, human resource development, institutional capacity building, child protection, gender equality, micro-credit and small-enterprise development. Paul Hunt of CIDA's Africa and Middle East Branch illustrated the range of Canadian partnerships with civil society and governmental actors across the region:

> The International Development Research Centre, for example, has provided research and capacity development support on the difficult Palestinian refugee issue. The Canadian Federation of Municipalities, the FCM, has provided support for the establishment of partnerships between Canadian and Palestinian municipalities and for helping to strengthen local

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[172] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1610).

[173] Ibid. (1600) For a broader review of the limits of Canadian policy in the region see Mira Sucharov, "A Multilateral Affair: Canadian Foreign Policy in the Middle East", in David Carment, Fen Osler Hampson, and Norman Hillmer, eds., *Canada Among Nations 2003: Coping with the American Colossus*, Oxford University Press, Don Mills, 2003, p. 312-331.

> governance, which affects citizens at the local and community levels. Oxfam and Oxfam-Québec have made a strong and ongoing commitment to assist vulnerable Palestinian communities. And the Department of Education of the Government of New Brunswick has done innovative work on e-learning and education, in both official languages, in collaboration with the Government of Jordan.[174]

Canada's development and humanitarian assistance efforts have "made CIDA's brand recognizable to Arabs and Muslims", according to Raja Khouri of the Canadian Arab Federation. "Such actions demonstrate Canada's values, policies, and national identity to ordinary Arabs and Muslims." Khouri advocated further educational and dialogue initiatives, using trade and economic levers to push democratic reforms, and enhanced funding and support for "non-governmental organizations and UN agencies that work in literacy, social and democratic development, and education in Arab and Muslim countries ... Much of the root causes of radicalism and the attraction to reactionary religious doctrines stem from ignorance, poverty, and lack of opportunity and social development."[175]

Of course, one of the major complicating factors overhanging development efforts in the Middle East are the proximate effects of the tragic Israeli-Palestinian conflict that shows little sign of abating. Many witnesses both in Canada and abroad stressed the resolution of this conflict as ultimately central to realizing peaceful, democratic and sustainable development across the region. We will address the specific question of the Middle East peace process later in this report. But at this point we also want to note the caveat that this unfortunate conflict not be used to deflect attention from what can and should be done to address development and democratic deficits within other countries of the region. Noah Feldman made the point in a compelling way that brought the question back to those wider struggles for democratic development.

> One will often hear in Muslim countries a sincerely felt concern for the plight of the Palestinian people. I myself think nothing could be more desirable than the speedy and just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a safe and secure two-state solution that affords security and freedom for both peoples. However, and this is an important however, it is also true that in a systematic way politicians in the Muslim world use the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to deflect attention from problems that are going on at home. Indeed, local Muslims who oppose their governments in the region can actually use the Israeli-Palestinian issue as an indirect way of talking about their discomfort with their own governments. When they criticize western governments for tolerating the conditions there, they are implicitly criticizing their own governments for, in their view, colluding with

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[174] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 50 (1115). Additional CIDA initiatives were announced by the Hon. Aileen Carroll, Minister for International Cooperation, in March 2004. (For details see "Canada supports private sector development, social development and peacebuilding in the Middle East," CIDA, News Release, March 3, 2004.)

[175] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1120).

western governments who are responsible for this. Often that is the only politically acceptable way to express a criticism of their own governments.[176]

The Way Forward

In looking at a regional approach, the Committee acknowledges the diversity of the countries visited and viewpoints encountered. It is difficult enough to summarize such findings, nor do we assume there can be any single or simple policy "recipe" to be applied to fit all circumstances. Nonetheless, there are some underlying themes that emerged quite consistently throughout our discussions. They reflect issues that are clearly held to be important by Muslims in the mainstream across the region and that therefore ought to be taken into account in the development of Canadian foreign policy.

- **It is important to overcome negative stereotypes of Islam (e.g., in the media, "clash" hypotheses, etc.) and any stigmatization of the vast majority of Muslims who reject extremism and terrorism. Increased Western knowledge of Muslim societies, attention to regional public diplomacy, media as well as educational reforms are needed for shared learning that counteracts dismissive or distorted views on either side.[177]**

- **Canada enhances its reputation and ability to play an honest broker role when it maintains an independent foreign policy standpoint that reflects its distinctive identity and voice, notably in relation to U.S. policies in the region. Canada's image as a moderate, multicultural, multilaterally minded international actor among nations is a valuable diplomatic asset.**

- **Regional peacebuilding requires a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.**

- **Governance and other political and social reforms are required in Muslim countries, including in sensitive areas such as religious education. However, such reforms are unlikely to succeed on a basis of external imposition or great-power interference. Outside**

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[176] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1120).

[177] Canada could perhaps also benefit from the debates taking place in the United States on the weaknesses of its public diplomacy and ability to engage in positive dialogue with the Arab and Muslim world. See, for example, Marc Lynch, "Taking Arabs Seriously", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2003.

governments need to be smart, sensitive and sophisticated about how they provide support to internal change agents.

- **Increased contacts with Canada are welcome at many levels, especially educational and cultural exchanges, but also expanding civil society and private sector ties more generally.**

- **Strengthened relations would benefit from more opportunities for dialogue including through parliamentary contacts and forthright discussions on issues where there may be serious bilateral tensions. Across the region there is a genuine desire to build good relations and to work with Canada bilaterally, regionally and globally.**

Turkey

Turkey is the principal successor state that emerged on the ruins of the Ottoman empire following the First World War. The modern Turkish republic was established by Mustafa Kemal in 1923 along secular and unitary lines. The Islamic Caliphate was abolished and a Western-influenced constitution adopted. Under Kemal, who later took the name "Ataturk" which means "father of the Turks", Turkey developed as a modernizing one-party state. Multi-party elections did not take place until after the Second World War (in which Turkey was neutral). During the Cold War, Turkey allied itself to the West, becoming the first and sole Muslim member-state of NATO. However Turkey's emerging democracy was interrupted by military coups in the following decades of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Since the end of the last period of military rule in 1983, parties with Islamic tendencies have gained ground notwithstanding the staunch secularism of the military establishment which sees itself as a guardian of the Kemalist constitution. This trend culminated with the sweeping election victory of Recip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) in November 2002 when it took 35% of the vote and 363 of the 550 seats in the unicameral legislature. An indication of the public disillusionment with the old parties was that virtually none attained the necessary 10% threshold to have representation in parliament. A ban on Erdogan seeking election to Parliament because of an Islamist speech he had made several years earlier was subsequently removed and he became Turkey's prime minister in March 2003.

Turkey's nearly 70 million people are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim.[178] Although the republic is legally and constitutionally secular, as Turkish professor of Islamic law Osman Tastan explained to the Committee, what "Turkey shares with other Muslim countries is a sensitivity about the Muslim identity". At the same time, there are major differences with the Arab Muslim states, notably in the restrictions on religious education and a more individualistic understanding of Islam. As Tastan pointed out: "Madrassas [Islamic schools] were banned at the beginning of the twentieth century in Turkey. In this way, there are religious teachers, but no more can we say these are religious leaders who could mobilize masses in Turkey. ... Turkey is more in touch with Islam through Sufism as well, in the popular sense, in popular culture. This is very much a silent attachment to Islam's practices in personal, private rooms and so on. This is different from a sharp textual understanding of Islam ... ".[179]

With the coming to power of a moderately Islamist party, the question has been posed whether Turkey remains an anomaly within the Muslim world or whether it could act as a "model" of some kind for the development of Muslim democracy. Noah Feldman was sceptical of a wider application:

> With respect to successfully promoting democracy in a Muslim country, I don't think there is one exemplar of how to do it. Turkey is a place where you have a developing democracy doing rather well, with an Islamic-oriented government behaving very democratically, respecting rights — not perfectly at all, but doing a very good job, a better job, frankly, than their secular predecessors — but you can't replicate the process because it came about through a 75-year period of fairly autocratic government that repressed religion in a way that was not compatible with the basic freedom of religious exercise. It's hard to have an example of some place that just automatically works.[180]

There is nonetheless cautious optimism, as indicated in the above comment, that Turkey itself is on a promising path and that the populist Islamic character of the AKP has so far shown itself to be pragmatic and accommodating. Indeed it can be argued that the AKP's victory was a healthy development that would reconcile Islam with reforms bringing Turkey closer to Europe. As one post-election analysis put it: "Turkey is not on the verge of an Islamic revolution. The one-third of the electorate who voted for the Muslim democratic Justice and Development Party do not want that, and the Party's leaders are not aiming for it. ... With a Muslim democratic party in power, westernization will become a more legitimate consensus: Islamists who were staying on the margins of the democratic system will be incorporated into it just as Europe's Christian democratic movement succeeded in the early years of the 20th century in reconciling Christians with the Republic." [181]

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[178] The main sectarian division is an ethnic one with the minority Kurdish population making up 15-20% of the population. A long-running conflict with left-wing Kurdish militants was the main source of domestic terrorism prior to the infiltration of Islamist jihadism.

[179] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 52 (1235).

[180] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1225).

Given Turkey's unusual standing as a Muslim NATO ally (Istanbul will host the next NATO summit in June 2004) that has had historically close relations with Israel as well as the United States, the progress of the AKP government has been watched closely in Western capitals.[182] Despite complications caused by the Iraq war[183] which was massively unpopular with Turks — Turkey resisted pressures to support the invasion and later withdrew an offer to send troops to occupied Iraq — the Erdogan government appears to have manoeuvred adroitly in a number of key areas while keeping in check the suspicions of the powerful military.

There were reports in early 2004 that the Turkish military had agreed to a unified solution for Cyprus, the Greek part of which will join the European Union on May 1, 2004. Then on February 13, 2004, through the intervention of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, an historic tentative agreement was reached that could pave the way to reunification of the island in time for the May entry into the EU.[184] That would remove a major obstacle to Turkey's own hopes for EU accession, the status of which is to be reviewed at a December 2004 EU summit. The AKP government is credited with pushing through reforms and pursuing a strongly pro-European approach. And the government seems intent on repairing relations with the United States as indicated by Prime Minister Erdogan's January 2004 meeting in Washington with President Bush.[185]

The shocking terrorist bombings that took place in Istanbul in November 2003 several weeks after the Committee's visit are unlikely to weaken Turkey's bonds to the West; indeed they may have the opposite effect. A prominent Turkish academic has argued that: "The terrorist acts will steel the resolve of an increasingly assertive and pro-EU public."[186] At the same time, the eruption of radical Islamist terrorism on Turkish soil after an absence of some years presents another daunting challenge for the moderate Islamic approach to democracy espoused by the current government.[187]

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[181] Guy Sorman, "Turquie: Après la victoire aux législatives des « islamistes modérés » Vers un islam de progrès?", *Le Figaro*, November 6, 2002, p. 15. See also Alex Captain, "Divine Inspiration. Islamism in Secular Turkey", *Harvard International Review*, Winter 2003, p. 6-7.

[182] See Deborah Sontag, "The Erdogan Experiment", *The New York Times Magazine*, May 11, 2003, p. 42-47.

[183] For analysis of the impact of the Iraq crisis on Turkish foreign policy see Hamit Bozarslan, "La Turquie: puissance régionale et forteresse assiégée?", *Politique étrangère*, Spring 2003, p. 93-102; Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Turkey says no", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 2003, p. 22-25.

[184] Warren Hoge, "Cyprus Greeks and Turks Agree on Plan to End 40-Year Conflict", *The New York Times*, February 14, 2004; "One last push for peace", *The Economist*, February 16, 2004. See also "A window of opportunity on Cyprus: Last chance for reunification?", *Strategic Comments*, 10:2, March 2004.

[185] Indeed the White House seems more welcoming of Erdogan's brand of Islamic politics than Turkey's own secular establishment. As *The Economist* reported: "If Turkey is to evolve into the full-fledged democracy underpinned by moderate Islam that America wants, the generals and other members of Turkey's secular elite must learn to coexist with millions of openly pious Turks, instead of calling them all Islamic militants. Some such subversives may wonder how it is that the prime minister's wife, Ermine, is banned from official functions in Ankara because she wears the Islamic headscarf, and yet can be received by Laura Bush for coffee at the White House". ("Coming to America", January 24, 2004, p. 45.)

Witness Views in Turkey

There was considerable discussion in the Committee's meetings in Turkey on the nature of growing Islamic influence within the society and in government. Freelance journalist and television commentator Rusen Cakir, an expert on extremist groups such as the Turkish "Hezbollah", urged that the role of Islam be seen in context and not exaggerated. He described an Islamic mobilization that is first cultural and socio-economic before becoming political. Unfortunately, though, Western media seem not very interested in the positive side of this Islamic renaissance. Cakir stated that Islamism as a militant political ideology does not appeal to most Muslims in Turkey. There is no chance of any armed movement succeeding even if the country has suffered from episodes of domestic terrorism (with some foreign involvement, noting that of Iran). The growing identification with Islam across a wide spectrum of Turkish society is a response to a number of pressures for change, and the AKP's election may in fact help to defuse those pressures.

Analysing the sources of the AKP's appeal, Mustafa Karaalioglu, Ankara Bureau Chief of a leading newspaper, agreed with Cakir that a radical Islamist takeover is not a real threat. He noted that Muslim religious leaders have strongly condemned terrorist violence. As elsewhere in the Muslim world, there is considerable resentment of U.S. and Israeli policies in the Middle East. Observers should be careful, however, not to take extreme voices as representing the Muslim community. Karaalioglu explained that the AKP has its home grown roots in NGO, social justice and reform movements, the religious element of which is compatible with Turkey's modern secular state. The Kemalist inheritance, and the even older one of a polyglot Ottoman society that tolerated diversity, is not in danger of being overthrown by an extreme Islamization of society.

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[186] Soli Ozel, "Radicals who abhor moderate Islam", *International Herald Tribune*, November 22-23, 2003.

[187] On the terrorist threat in Turkey see "Terror in Turkey", *Strategic Comments*, 9:10, December 2003, p. 1-2. Some analysts have doubts whether the AKP's moderate version of political Islam in accordance with secular democracy can tame or contain that threat, which may have targeted the Turkish model as much as Jewish and British institutions. According to Iranian author Amir Taheri: "A pattern has been established over the past quarter of a century. Each time Turkish politics has taken an Islamist turn, the broader Islamist movement has become more radical and violent. Erdogan has made the mistake ... of assuming that the Islamist ideology could be exercised in moderation. ... even if you are Islamist yourself, there will always be someone to pretend he is more Islamist than you." ("Turkey's Islamist Monster", *National Post*, November 27, 2003.)

Other witnesses concurred that the ascendance of the AKP to power could be viewed as having positive liberalizing and democratizing effects. Professor Baskin Oran of Ankara University pointed out that the AKP has in fact been able to move faster than previous governments on EU accession issues, promoting reform measures in areas such as human rights corresponding to the criteria for negotiating accession. He was confident that "Turkey is going to do its homework" in order to be able to join the EU. Paradoxically, the AKP's Islamic "sub-identity" makes it more trusted at home to be able to negotiate Turkey's place within the larger European "supra-identity". Ahmet Yasar Ocak, a historian at Hacetteppe University, argued that the AKP represents a civilized accommodation of modernity and Islam that should be given a chance because it could "lead us to real democracy".

On the growth of religious consciousness within Turkish society along with interest in religious education, Hadi Adanali of Ankara University's Faculty of Divinity advised that it be viewed in a positive light provided there is an ongoing critical evaluation of religious teaching so that it is a force for peaceful coexistence, tolerance and justice.[188] The loss of faith in ideologies of secular nationalism has left an opening for political movements with an Islamic character to flourish, and to become a force for democratization. Just as the secularization of the state was a process indigenous to Turkey under Ataturk, Turkey will have to find its own way to accommodate the influence of Islam within its political system under today's globalizing impacts. The fear is that in the process established secular rights could be undermined, in particular, rights for women. Yet as Professor Adanali pointed out, many Muslims see state restrictions such as the ban on women wearing the headscarf in universities as a denial of religious rights. (Indeed the jailing of women for wearing the headscarf has been an object of EU criticism of the Turkish government for violating religious freedom.[189])

The difficulties of this debate were illustrated by the contrasting views of two prominent NGO witnesses. Sema Kendirci, President of the Turkish Women's Union, insisted that a strict separation of religion and state be maintained. That included public rules of secular citizenship with full political rights for women, noting recent legislative advances in that regard. The problem with the Muslim headscarf is when it "started to be used as a political symbol". (In Ottawa, Professor Turgay had told the Committee: "In Turkey a woman wearing a head cover is a very political message. That is the reason they are very careful about it."[190] Dr. Tastan also pointed to a fear of influence from the Iranian revolution.[191])

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[188] Professor Adanali also submitted a written paper to the Committee on "The Many Dimensions of Religious Education in Turkey".

[189] The wife of Turkey's foreign minister Abullah Gul also has a complaint for damages before the European Court of Human Rights for being refused admission to Ankara University because she wears the headscarf.

Fatma Botsan Unsal of the Capital City Women's Platform acknowledged that she started wearing the headscarf when becoming politically involved as a founding member of the governing AKP (for which she cannot stand as a candidate because she would have to remove her headscarf in parliament[192]). She objected to being forced into either a "Westernist" or "Islamist" mold, arguing that the issue should be one of women's free choice whether the reasons for choosing to wear the headscarf are "political" or "cultural". Ms. Unsal contended that a majority of the public favors removing the ban, though the AKP government is treading cautiously and has so far not moved in this direction. Views are mixed as to whether preserving such a ban helps to curb, or perversely contributes to, Islamic radicalism.[193]

Of course there are more serious human rights concerns at issue than clothing restrictions. Ms. Kendirci noted that her organization had wanted to form a political party to press for women's rights but was denied that official recognition. The struggle was going forward at the level of popular social mobilization around rights to education, protection from domestic violence, prevention of "honour killings", and other priorities.

A rather harsh assessment of the overall human rights situation was provided by Yilmaz Ensaroglu, President of Maszlum-Der (Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People), the country's largest Islamic human rights NGO. He contended that "human rights are violated on a large scale in Turkey" and that "the existing legal system is not capable of protecting human rights". This includes religious and educational rights, in particular of the Kurdish minority whose identity and language have been suppressed. Although Turkey has ratified major international human rights conventions and the pressures applied by European criteria are welcome, if not always effective, implementation in domestic practice is lacking and parliamentary attention uneven. Concerns persist about top-down control of the political process, independence of the judiciary, restrictions on NGOs, civil rights and media freedom,[194] prison conditions and the use of torture among other abuses.[195]

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[190] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1745).

[191] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 52 (1245).

[192] Only about 4% of the current members of Parliament are women.

[193] On the perils of the ban see "Veiled threats: The bad side-effects of a headscarf ban", *The Economist*, December 6, 2003, p. 46. French proposals to institute public restrictions on wearing religious symbols including the headscarf seem to have inflamed Muslim opinion worldwide.

Directions for Canadian Policy

One symbolic issue involving Canada that has surfaced since the Committee's visit as a flashpoint of civil freedoms and democratic openness in Turkey is the controversy over the showing of the film "Ararat" by Toronto director Atom Egoyan. The subject of the film touches on the alleged Armenian "genocide" of the First World War era, an extremely sensitive topic to this day in Turkey (which has never accepted responsibility), as confirmed by Professor Tastan in his Ottawa testimony.[196] The Turkish government's minister of culture and tourism approved the film in late 2003, saying it was evidence of the country's democratic maturity. However, the scheduled release in January 2004 has been indefinitely postponed due to threats from extreme nationalist groups to attack theatres showing it.[197] It is a small but telling indication that Turkey's journey towards liberal democracy, which has taken some steps forward under the current moderate Islamic government, remains a work in progress.

At the same time, as Canada's Ambassador Michael Leir observed, Turkey is clearly a country of strategic importance in the Muslim world, not only as a historic crossroads between West and East, but also for its experience as a secular Muslim state that is seeking to embrace Islam in a democratic way. More could be done to improve already good bilateral relations with Canada. For example, Ambassador Leir mentioned the creation of a Canadian-Turkish Business Council. What is most important for the purposes of this study is that

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[194] The BBC News country profile of Turkey states: "For Turkish journalists, the subjects of the military, Kurds and political Islam are highly sensitive and can lead to arrest and criminal prosecution. Media watchdogs and rights groups report that journalists have been imprisoned, or attacked by police. It is also common for radio and TV stations to have their broadcasts suspended for airing sensitive material."

[195] As part of Turkey's efforts to clean up its act in the eyes of Europe, there are nonetheless serious efforts being made, including by Istanbul's deputy policy chief Halil Yilmaz, to reduce impunity for the practice of human rights crimes such as torture. According to a Canadian investigative report:

> "To end impunity, the Turkish government changed the law in January 2003 to say that torture cases must proceed without delay, and that offenders cannot be punished with suspended sentences or fines. Torturers cannot be included in general amnesties. They must also pay damages to their victims. Is it working? Mr. Yilmaz thinks it's too soon to tell. "I've always believed in these reforms, but now I have to wait and see if they are effective or not". Turkish human rights activists are ambivalent. "We can't deny that there has been improvement," says Shaban Bayanan of the Human Rights Association, "but we don't see any great changes." … All agree that torture continues in Turkey". (Dan Gardner, "An End to Torture", *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 5, 2004, p. A6).

[196] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 52 (1300).

[197] Mary Vallis, "Extremist Threats Stall Egoyan Film", *National Post*, January 7, 2004, p. A3; Stephen Kinzer, "Movie on Armenians Rekindles Flame Over Turkish Past", *The New York Times*, January 20, 2004.

Canada be supportive of reform processes in Turkey, without obviously becoming embroiled in domestic disputes over issues such as the headscarf ban. Canada should encourage Turkey to live up to its international human rights commitments, to continue on a path to EU accession, and to negotiate a long-awaited resolution on Cyprus — a country in which Canada maintains a special interest given the presence of peacekeeping troops over several decades.

Modern Turkey may not be a “model” that can be replicated in the rest of the Muslim world, but its present moderate approach to the building of a democracy with Islamic characteristics is one that can have an important demonstration effect. One report following Prime Minister Erdgoan’s meeting with U.S. President Bush in early 2004 put it this way:

> Although the Turkish prime minister and his Justice and Development Party have Islamist roots, they are proving in office to be of the liberal variety that believes in free markets and secular democracy. If democracy is to be successfully fostered across the Muslim world, especially in Arab countries, it is vital to encourage this Turkish exemplar.[198]

Moreover, as a target of extreme Islamist terrorism, Turkey can also be an important voice in the Muslim world in devising effective strategies to counteract such terrorism. At the same time, Turkey must be subject to continued pressure from Canada and other countries to improve its human rights performance.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Canada should encourage the Government of Turkey to be a voice of democracy and moderation within the Muslim world and to continue to implement democratic and human rights reforms, including respecting the rights of its Kurdish minority, in compliance with Turkey’s international obligations and aspirations to join the European Union.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Government of Canada should explore ways to facilitate further contacts with Turkey both at the official level and through private sector, civil society, educational and cultural connections. Consideration should be given to inviting Prime Minister Recep Erdogan to visit Canada and to address Parliament on, among other matters, strengthening ties with countries of the Muslim world.

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[198] “The importance of backing Erdogan”, *The Economist*, January 31, 2004, p. 15.

Iran

Iran, with a fast-growing population approaching 70 million (of which 50% are under age 20) is the other major non-Arab country in the Muslim Middle East. Iranian society, while overwhelmingly Shi'a Muslim, is the proud inheritor of a pre-Islamic Persian past and contains non-Muslim religious and ethnic minorities. Yet since the Khomeinist revolution of 1979 Iran's image has become associated with domination by a militant anti-Western Islamist political ideology. The Islamic Republic of Iran is the world's only official theocracy. While there is a 290 member elected Parliament (the Islamic Consultative Assembly known as the "Majlis"), its legislation can be blocked by a 12-member constitutional Council of Guardians that answers only to the Spiritual Leader where the ultimate power resides. The Spiritual Leader (currently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei) can also dismiss the elected president and head of state (currently Mohammed Khatami, first elected in 1997 with 70% support and re-elected in 2001 with a strong "reformist" majority behind him).

As Ambassador Philip MacKinnon observed to the Committee in Tehran, Iran is a country of contradictions beyond the troubled surface appearance of a country of frustrated young people ruled by elderly male clerics. Though Iran is far from being a democracy, it is also in the throes of complex social and political dynamics that include participation by an assertive educated female population. Shi'ite Islam, it can be argued, is more open to modern interpretations than is traditional Sunni Islam in much of the Arab world. Yet Iran's religious leaders have given it "a very conservative interpretation", according to Professor Turgay of McGill University, who also made pointed reference to "intense corruption at the highest levels of the mullahs".[199]

The major question facing the country, a quarter century after the revolution, seems to be whether the current Islamic regime can reform itself sufficiently to cope with the enormous demographic and socio-economic stresses that have been building up[200] and that were manifested in growing public disillusionment with the ability of their elected reform-minded parliamentary majority and government to turn things around.[201]

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[199] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1215). He added that: "People's interpretations of Islam in their hearts and in their daily lives are quite different to the selfish, self-centred, and self-serving interpretations of Islam by some of these governments".

[200] Despite Iran's natural resource wealth (that includes 10% of the world's known oil reserves), living standards have been declining and by some estimates 40% of the population are poor. Access to higher education and jobs are major issues for the growing numbers of young people (two-thirds of Iranians are under age 30).

[201] For useful surveys of the evolving situation see "God's rule, or man's?", *The Economist*, January 18, 2003; Farhad Khosrokhavar, "La politique étrangère en Iran: de la révolution à l'"axe du Mal", *Politique étrangère*, Spring 2003, p. 77-91; Paul-Marie de la Gorge, "La République islamique d'Iran sous pression", *Le Monde diplomatique*, July 2003, p. 8-9; "Iran: Discontent and Disarray", International Crisis Group Middle East Briefing, Amman/Brussels, October 15, 2003.

Indeed, even before the latest confrontation between religious "conservatives" and political "reformers", many feared that the turnout in the scheduled February 20, 2004 legislative elections would be dismally low[202], handing victory to the conservative establishment by default. Since the Committee's visit, another undemocratic element of the Islamic constitution that has come into play, with conservative elements prevailing in a crucial standoff with reformers, is the power of the Council of Guardians to rule on the admissibility of candidates for elections.

On January 11, 2004, the Council disqualified 4,000 candidates including over 80 serving parliamentarians — among them prominent members of the Majlis with whom the Committee had met — from running in the February elections, an apparent effort to engineer a conservative legislative majority.[203] Reform parliamentarians fought back, staging a sit-in at the Majlis and passing a bill on January 25 to overturn the disqualifications. That move was checked by the Guardian Council exercising its legislative veto, provoking reformers — including President Khatami's brother, one of the disqualified MPs and leader of the largest reform group, the Islamic Participation Front — to call for the elections to be boycotted or suspended.[204] The stakes were raised on February 1, 2004 when over 100 members of the Majlis submitted their resignations in protest., and again on February 15 when the reformist parliamentarians sent a harshly worded letter to Ayatollah Khamenei.[205] Nobel winner Shirin Ebadi was among prominent Iranians joining the election boycott.

The Khatami government had raised the prospect it might resign if unable to secure reinstatement of disqualified MPs or postponement of the elections, decisions that rest with the Supreme Leader and Guardian Council.[206] However, when Ayatollah Khamenei refused to delay the vote, the government appeared once again to back down and bow to flawed elections dominated by conservatives.[207] More ominous is the observation of one report that: "Public interest in the electoral row remains muted. Nearly seven years after Khatami's landslide election win, most Iranians have grown disillusioned with the reformists' ability to overcome hard-line opposition to reform."[208] The rigging of the results of the February 20 elections to produce conservative control of the Majlis has further damaged the regime's credibility domestically and internationally.[209] Voter turnout was the worst since the revolution — barely 50% nationally and under 30% in Tehran.

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[202] An indication that would be the case was in the sharply falling turnout in the February 2003 local elections; below 40% countrywide and only 10-13% in Tehran. (See *Iran Country Report*, Economist Intelligence Unit, London, September 2003, p. 7.)

[203] See "Special Report Iran: Their last chance?", *The Economist*, January 17, 2004, p. 19-21.

[204] "Iran hardliners throw elections into doubt", *The Ottawa Citizen*, January 26, 2004. According to this report: "Members of President Mohammad Khatami's government have said they will not hold what would be 'sham elections' if the disqualifications are upheld".

[205] "Over 100 Iran Lawmakers Submit Resignations", *The New York Times*, February 1, 2004. The unprecedented February 15 letter declared: "The revolution brought freedom and independence. ... But now you lead a system in which legitimate freedoms and the rights of the people are being trampled in the name of Islam". Reza Yousefian, one of the MPs the Committee met, described the letter as "a cry of agony for what's happening to our country" ("Reformers in Iran issue 'cry of agony'", *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 17, 2004).

[206] Nazila Fathi, "Iran's Leader Said to Refuse Delay in Vote", *The New York Times*, February 4, 2004.

[207] Paul Hughes, "Reformists in Iran brace for defeat", *National Post*, February 16, 2004. On the betrayal of Iranian hopes for an Islamic democracy see David Hirst, "Iran: still an Ayatollocracy", *The Globe and Mail*, February 19, 2004, p. A17.

Unless this political crisis — the worst in two decades coinciding with the revolution's 25th anniversary — can be surmounted, the regime's sustainability as well as credibility may be in the balance. Some argue that the demonstrable weakness of the internal political reform movement means the time has come to apply stronger external pressures. Such pressures seem to have had some effect late last year in the results of the tough stance taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the international community on Iran's serious breaches of its non-proliferation obligations not to develop nuclear weapons. With the threat of the matter being referred to the UN Security Council, which could have imposed sanctions, Iran appeared to come clean in late October 2003, pledging to suspend illicit uranium-enrichment activities and to allow additional IAEA inspections to monitor and verify compliance.[210] However additional concerns about Iran's covert nuclear activities surfaced in February 2004.[211] Following further censure by the IAEA in March 2004, Iran postponed the presence of inspectors.[212]

In addition to the democratic, human rights and nuclear concerns that Canada shares with other countries, a tragic matter that has gravely affected bilateral relations with Iran is the death while in detention in Tehran of Montreal photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, a holder of dual citizenship, on July 10, 2003. We will pursue the particulars in more detail below. Canada's dissatisfaction with the Iranian government's response to allegations of official complicity in Ms. Kazemi's death, as well as demands for the return of her body to Canada, led to the withdrawal of Canada's ambassador for several months. Following his return to Tehran, the Committee was still unsure of being able to obtain visas to enter Iran until just prior to departure, notwithstanding an earlier invitation issued by senior Iranian officials who had appeared before the Committee in 2002.[213] We hope that our encounters were able to provide timely encouragement to the courageous Iranians with whom we met who understood Canada's concerns and whose continued reform efforts must be supported if Iran is to have a peaceful democratic future.

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[208] "Iran Reformists Stick to Demands in Electoral Row", *The New York Times*, February 5, 2004.

[209] "Iran's election: What next?", *The Economist*, February 28, 2004, p. 14-15.

[210] For background on the extent and implications of Iran concealed nuclear program, see "Special Report, Dealing with Iran: Next on the list?", *The* Economist, June 14, 2003, p. 22-24; Ray Takeyh, "Iran's Nuclear Calculations", *World Policy Journal*, Summer 2003, p. 21-27; David Albright and Corey Hinderstein, "Iran, player or rogue?", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September/October 2003, 59:5, p. 52-58; Pierre Jolicoeur, "L'Iran et la question nucléaire", *Points de mire*, Centre d'études des politiques étrangères et de sécurité, Université du Québec à Montréal, 4:6, September 15, 2003; "Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program", International Crisis Group Middle East Report No. 18, Amman/Brussels, October 27, 2003.

[211] See Louis Charbonneau, "UN Warns of Nuclear Terrorism", *National Post*, February 13, 2004, p. A12; David Sanger and William Broad, "Iran Admits That It Has Plans for a Newer Centrifuge", *The New York Times*, February 13, 2004; "Iran: The divine right to a bomb," *The Economist*, February 28, 2004, p. 10.

[212] Craig Smith, "Iran Freezes Nuclear Inspections After It is Censured by the U.N.", *The New York Times*, March 14, 2004; "Iran Promises Resumption of Nuclear Inspections", *The New York Times*, March 15, 2004.

Witness Views in Iran

The Committee did not meet with religious hardliners whose power and influence we would certainly not discount. However, we were impressed with the articulateness and sincerity of the public officials with whom we did meet, both in their expressed desire for reforms to succeed and for increased dialogue with countries like Canada, and in their apparent determination to get to the bottom of the Kazemi affair. Our interlocutors were highly educated, some having studied at prestigious Western universities, and well versed in Western politics and foreign policies.

Dr. Mohsen Mirdamadi, Chair of the National Security and Foreign Relations Committee of the Majlis — and among the legislators disqualified from running for re-election in February 2004 — was one of several student leaders of the 1979 revolution with whom we met. He explained the revolutionary impulse of 1979 as one of overcoming despotism and affirming a "revolution of values" in order to create an Islamic form of republic. He rejected the proposition that religion, freedom and democracy cannot be compatibly combined. He agreed that Iran's form of Islamic democracy must evolve, but liberalizing reform must not harm the beliefs of the people. The aim is to achieve a democratic interpretation that remains faithful to Islam.

Dr. Mirdamadi acknowledged that there are contradictory interpretations and practices in different Muslim countries and that the path to democracy is a "major challenge" for Islamic societies. He also allowed that the general public interest could prevail over certain religious obligations in the case of a conflict. Questioned about the role of the clerical Council of Guardians in blocking Majlis legislation (for example, over accession to CEDAW[214]), Mirdamadi observed

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[213] The Committee heard testimony from Seyed Ali Ahani, then Vice-Minister for Europe and the Americas in Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (37th Parliament, 1st Session, Meeting No. 87, June 4, 2002.)

[214] The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. A reformist newspaper reported in October 2003 that the Guardian Council had vetoed 111 of the 295 bills passed by the Majlis. In recent years there have been numerous political arrests as well as the closure of pro-reform newspapers and journals.

Iranian society to be in a period of transitional development. It can learn from European and Western experience in ways that are adapted to Iranian values and culture. He cautioned against simple comparisons.

The question was put: Will people be patient enough to wait for more democracy? Responding that "more are happy than unhappy" and that President Khatami symbolizes support for more reform, Dr. Mirdamadi admitted that if he were still a student he would probably want faster reforms. No doubt he feels both less happy and more strongly about the imperative of change now than when we met with him. In remarks broadcast live on state radio during the pre-election crisis between the Majlis and the Guardian Council, he declared: "They want to cover the ugly body of dictatorship with the beautiful dress of democracy. We had no choice but to resign."[215]

Another former prominent student leader from 1979, Dr. Massoumeh Ebtekar, a Vice-President of the Islamic Republic and Minister of the Environment, described the students' primary motivation in one word as "dignity". Iran's national independence was at stake and international law could not have prevented a *coup d'état* that might have smashed the nascent Islamic revolution and the goal of an "Islamic democracy" for which people had given their lives. In her view the revolution established a "totally new Islamic paradigm" and an "Islamic republic" (not simply an Islamic state) approved by popular referendum. However there was no prior experience with this. What the reform process indicates is that the "democratic dimension" is still vibrant despite the many difficulties and challenges. She referred to a "vast spectrum of different viewpoints in Iranian society". A democracy in which in fact the most powerful have the final say is not what is wanted. What is needed is an "ethical politics" that accepts diversity while respecting majority religious and cultural values. In terms of the "paradigm of women's advancement" that means seeking equality of the sexes while respecting the central role of the family. Overall: "The reform process is facing quite difficult challenges in Iran, but it is moving forward. I'm quite optimistic that things will improve." Describing a complicated interplay of religious and democratic factors, she admitted it was difficult to find a balance but argued that Iran could be an example if it succeeds. The world wants to see human rights improvements and "that is natural".

Members of the Majlis Women's Faction with whom the Committee met were notably active on human rights issues, including pressing for justice in the investigation of Zahra Kazemi's murder while in official custody. Dr. Elaheh Koolaee (another of the disqualified legislators) observed that although women are a small number in the Majlis they are a big force in terms of activities and enjoy equal political rights (representation in the Majlis has risen from four to 13 members). She noted that over 60% of university students are women and that this is a society with a strong belief in higher education.[216] Questioned about the role of women in Iranian society, the effect of the Nobel prize being awarded to Shirin Ebadi, and her statement that Islam was not the problem in terms of discrimination but rather male-dominated cultures, the MPs responded that women have played a leading role in recent Iranian history — in the revolution, during the war with Iraq, and now within the reformist movement. Although there is much to overcome historically and debates over status continue, they see Islam as approving a fully active role for women in all spheres. It was noted that the number of women's NGOs "has increased remarkably in the past six years". There are new study centres and women are taking a higher profile. Ms. Ebadi was active in an NGO focused on the rights of children and can be seen as a role model. Her Nobel recognition is evidently a matter of pride for reformers who also see it as an expression of global interest in Iran's pluralistic social evolution under Islam.

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[215] Quoted in Parinoosh Arami, "Third of Iran's MPs Resign in Protest", *National Post*, February 2, 2004, p. A6.

Discussions with Majlis members representing official ethnic and religious minority groups also reported some, if insufficient, progress on issues ranging from religious, educational and cultural rights to socio-economic discrimination. Minorities, it was claimed, are able to exercise political rights. There is a special parliamentary committee on religious minorities and it was also observed that Iran's Ministry of Education employs 700 non-Muslims. Along with all of the Iranians we met, these spokespersons welcomed more opportunities for contacts and exchanges with Canadians. One who has family in Canada, MP Khosrow Dabestani representing the Zoroastrian community, introduced himself as heading a parliamentary friendship group with Canada. At the same time they hoped that in building bridges with the Muslim world Canada would separate itself from a "neo-conservative" U.S. worldview.

Not surprisingly, given Iran's inclusion in President Bush's "axis of evil" and an almost 25-year rupture in diplomatic relations with the United States, Iranians are looking for other approaches to and from the West. This surfaced strongly in a roundtable with members of the Institute for Political and International Studies, a research body linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Referring to the situation of post-war Iraq, Institute Director General Dr. Seyed Kazem Sajjadpour saw any notion of "dominoes of democracy" as being proven to be an unrealistic dream. At the same time, he was "very happy that Saddam is out ... and that his anti-Iranian ideology has collapsed". Iran had been first in line to recognize the Iraqi Governing Council and to seek cooperation with it, despite criticism from some Arab League states. The problem he saw was with the mentality of the Bush neo-conservatives (referring to the "axis of evil" label and phrases such as "creative chaos"). As he stated Iran's national interest: "We are for a stable Iraq." But Iran cannot support a foreign occupation. Stabilization of a very tough situation will not be possible without legitimacy.

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[216] Indeed, although women face many problems, literacy among young women has risen to 97% since the revolution. Moreover, as Nikki Keddie has pointed out:

> It is wrong to view most Muslim countries, Iran included, as monolithic autocracies in which women are primarily victims rather than people working to carve out a more autonomous and democratic existence. Women's struggles, along with the forces of modernization, have increased the public roles open to women in the Muslim world despite the growing power of Islamism, and this expansion of women's roles constitutes in itself a force for democratization. ("A Woman's Place: Democratization in the Middle East", *Current History*, January 2004, p. 25.)

On improving relations with the Muslim world, Canada was cautioned to "keep your distinction" because "too much identification with American foreign policy is not good". Dr. Sajjadpour observed that even U.S. studies are critically examining the weaknesses of that policy and the need for addressing the hard issues, notably the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Another speaker and former ambassador argued that westerners should not come to Iran seeking the roots of the problem, as if Islam were one of those problems. Religious differences are often exaggerated. What has happened is that the political-ideological lens resulting from September 11 has led to a fixation on threatening elements within Islam. What Iranians remember, however, is the long history of U.S. support for dictators. (He recalled being lobbied by the U.S. at one point to support the Afghan Taliban regime.) They don't believe that democracy can be brought like a gift of food to poor people. They "have no confidence" in U.S. good intentions. So: "I hope there are different approaches in the Western world."

Roundtable participants observed that there is a range of democratic and authoritarian interpretations of Islam. The hardliners in the Muslim world and in the West are the ones that will take us to a "clash", so it is the moderates on each side who must find peaceful accommodation. On their side, as MP Reza Yousefian[217] put it, there is "no conflict [of Islam] with democracy and human rights". Dr. Sajjadpour, noting that Iran invented chess, urged understanding the complexities of its situation and avoiding dealing in black and white stereotypes. Iran, he stated, had the first democratic revolution in the Middle East (in 1906). That desire is in the people, he said, affirming that: "Democracy is a process for all."

Despite these brave words, the Committee also heard more critical testimony on the situation of democracy and human rights in Iran and the risks faced by independent thinkers and defenders of those rights. Dr. Ayatollah Seyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, High Commissioner of the Islamic Human Rights Commission of Iran and also a professor of Islamic law, observed that "the basic problem is the people don't know their rights". Therefore rights education and promotion are essential. People are used to obeying what they are told and seeing rights as something to be requested from government. Mr. Mohammad Hassan Ziaiefar, Secretary General of the Commission, pointed to a history of dictatorship to be overcome, referring to the saying of renowned Iranian film director Mohsen Makhmalbaf about there being a "dictatorship mentality" within individual Iranians. Working for democracy in an environment lacking precedents or preparation requires much to be done to inculcate democratic values and habits in the population. He used the metaphor of a "triangle" — among the established political leadership, outside political forces and the grassroots society, including better working relationships with NGOs — to indicate the process needed to meet Iran's post-revolutionary challenges.

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[217] Mr. Yousefian, another of the disqualified reformist legislators, was a representative from Shiraz who had learned English during seven years spent in an Iraqi prisoner of war camp.

Mr. Ziaiefar was very candid that human rights, and even his own security, remain at risk in Iran: "I have to say honestly it is a bad situation." Yet reformist movements are bringing attention to human rights violations and growing numbers of advocates will not give up the struggle. He remained confident that the "force of the people will prevail. ... Nowadays human rights violators have been identified, isolated and rejected." He added that "Democracy is not a gift to be presented to us from outside but has to happen from within the society", then it becomes an unstoppable force. Dr. Damad was equally blunt: "Without democracy, we have no human rights at all." (In that regard he referred to the recent holding of a human rights conference in Saudi Arabia as being "nonsense", and also criticized the West for targeting Iran given that it permits much more open debate about Islam than does Saudi Arabia.) The good news is the people's desire for democracy and for an end to corruption. His private view as a mullah was that a Muslim government is appropriate for a Muslim people, but it should not be an "ideological" religious government or a "theocracy" that negates human rights.

Dr. Damad observed that it is very important for Western governments to approach the issue of human rights in Iran from the standpoint of benefits for the people of the country. If Western motives are perceived to be only self-interested, based on security or anti-terrorism fears, Western interest will be seen as attacking not assisting. U.S. motives are not believed. How can the war in Iraq be about human rights when U.S. and French leaders knew about the human rights atrocities for years but did nothing? The point was made that all human rights must be defended to avoid any perception among Iranians that Canadians care only about the Kazemi case. In Damad's view, the West needs a better understanding of different schools of Islamic thought on human rights. And "civil society in every Muslim country needs help." But to be genuine this help must avoid a legacy of past double standards and any self-serving political agenda in order to build long-term supporting partnerships that appreciate Iranians' situation and concerns.

The Case of Zahra Kazemi and Human Rights in Iran

Montreal-based Canadian-Iranian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi was arrested on June 23, 2003 while taking photographs outside Tehran's Evin prison where many political prisoners have been held. She was using her Iranian passport (Iran like many countries does not recognize dual citizenship) and had Iranian press accreditation. Ms. Kazemi was detained without official charge in solitary confinement and during the next days suffered life-threatening physical injuries under interrogation, indicating that torture was used. After being transferred to a hospital on June 27, she died of these injuries on July 10 and was buried in Iran on July 22 despite her son's wishes that her body be returned to Canada. A number of Canadian organizations called on the Government of Canada to take a series of actions pressing for answers from the Iranian government and seeking justice for the torture and murder of a Canadian citizen while in its custody.

At the time of the Committee's meeting in Tehran in mid-October 2003, a trial was underway of an intelligence ministry official accused of beating Ms. Kazemi. Canada was requesting and subsequently granted a third seat in the courtroom for a non-governmental representative. However, there were strong suspicions of a high-level official cover-up despite the legal proceeding, which was being overseen by the chief prosecutor, Saeed Mortazavi, whom many believed to be the one actually responsible for Ms. Kazemi's death.

In addition, as the Committee heard, there was intense activity in the Majlis to get the truth and see justice done. Even Iranians who saw this as an unfortunate individual case made a point of stating their shared concerns in that regard. Dr. Mirdamadi in the Committee's first meeting noted that the circumstances of the murder had provoked one of the lengthiest debates in the Majlis. Among the most outspoken on the subject was Majlis Vice-Speaker Mohsen Armin (yet another of the disqualified MPs) with whom Members met separately and discussed the related work of the parliamentary "Article 90" commission that inquires into infringements of citizens' constitutional and legal rights. MP Dr. Jamileh Kadivar of the Women's Faction, who sits on that committee (and who ran in the February 20 elections), was able to provide the Committee with details of its investigation from the time of Ms. Kazemi's arrest, indicating that a 19-page report had received majority approval although it had been held up from being "read out" in the Parliament by questionable procedural manoeuvres. She was hopeful these would be overcome, and indeed it was Dr. Kadivar who read out that highly critical report in the Majlis on October 28 that pointed the finger of culpability squarely at chief prosecutor Mortazavi and his office. Dr. Kadivar had indicated to us that Article 90 committee members would push for an independent trial of those responsible.[218] The heads of the human rights commission with whom we met also acknowledged the problems with Iran's judicial structures and indicated that they were pushing for an independent commission of inquiry in order to restore the confidence of the Iranian people.

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[218] In an ironic twist, however, on the very day of the release of the report there was also a parliamentary setback when Vice-Speaker Armin, "who technically enjoys parliamentary immunity, was sentenced to six months in prison for allegedly insulting one of his hardline colleagues". (Jonathon Gatehouse, "Seeking Answers", *Maclean's*, November 10, 2003, p. 30.) As of early 2004, Mr. Armin had not been jailed and was challenging the verdict.

The Committee takes note of these efforts in good faith. We also appreciate that it is important to convey Canadian concerns in ways that support Iranians working for reforms from within the society and its political institutions. Nonetheless, the Government of Iran must be kept on notice and held accountable that justice for Zahra Kazemi and her family has still not been done or seen to be done. This matter awaits a satisfactory resolution. Indeed the trial proceeding was abruptly adjourned without explanation in October 2003. A second suspect was reported to have been detained in February 2004, but there was no official indication of any new trial.[219] As well, in February 2004, the gravity of the Kazemi case and what appears to be an official cover-up were also underlined in a highly critical report by United Nations Human Rights Commission special rapporteur Ambeyi Ligabo on rights abuses in Iran.[220] Furthermore, developments surrounding the disputed February 2004 elections are extremely disturbing for the progress of human rights and democratic reforms within Iran as a whole.

Directions for Canadian Policy

The Committee recognizes the potential for an expanding relationship with Iran, the world's most important Shi'a Muslim country. With some 2,000 Canadians living in Iran and 300,000 Iranian Canadians resident in Canada, this is an issue of direct interest to many Canadians. Canadians as a whole were outraged by the murder of Zahra Kazemi. But Canadians also responded generously to the plight of victims of the devastating late December earthquake in Bam in southeastern Iran. The Committee takes note of the January 23, 2004 announcement by International Cooperation Minister Aileen Carroll — who was a committee member during our meetings in Tehran — that Canadian official assistance to Iran in the wake of this disaster will rise to over $1.5 million.

The Committee appreciates what we were told about Iranians' positive perception of Canada, the interest in pursuing political and cultural dialogue, the demand for student visas to Canada and more educational exchanges, and even the possibility of developing economic and trade relations as a springboard to the markets of the Middle East. But much will depend on Iran's good faith in following through on its nuclear non-proliferation commitments, its dissociation from any support for Islamist terrorism, and on the capacity of the Iranian authorities to achieve major legal and political reforms. Recent events do not augur well in regard to the latter.

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[219] Graeme Hamilton, "Iran arrests a second suspect in Kazemi murder", *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 17, 2004, p. A4.

[220] Andrew McIntosh, "UN slams Iran on Kazemi case", *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 1, 2004, p. A3.

The Committee expresses deep concern at the disqualification of reform-minded Iranian parliamentarians who were demanding a fair and democratic electoral process. The Committee also applauds Canada's leadership at the United Nations in pressing concerns about human rights conditions in Iran.[221] These efforts should be pursued even more vigorously in light of the recent critical findings of the UN Human Rights Commission's special rapporteur on Iran.

The International Crisis Group report cited earlier made the point that: "Many Iranians now place significant hope in vigorous external endeavours to press Iran on human rights and political reform ... Iranians also make clear, however, that expanded people-to-people contacts and economic exchanges would help enlarge personal freedoms". In other words, simply isolating or punishing Iran is unlikely to be an effective policy approach. As the ICG report concludes:

> The depth of popular disaffection and the contradiction at the heart of the Iranian regime are such that its long-term sustainability in its present form is in serious doubt. Greater economic and cultural contacts with the outside world, combined with continued international insistence on seeing political reform and more respect for human rights, will strengthen Iran's burgeoning civil society not weaken it, and dilute the conservatives' hold on power rather than fortify it.[222]

Noah Feldman, the American expert on Islamic democracy who testified after our meetings in Iran, offered an assessment that broadly agrees with the above, though without underestimating the uncertainties and the challenges ahead for both Iran and its partners.

> With respect to Iran, somebody said the people are the right reason for hope there, and roughly speaking, I agree with that. On two different occasions 70% of the people voted for the only reformer on the ballot available to them to vote for, and they voted overwhelmingly for a legislature that expressed reform. ... those elections seem not to have paid off in practice, and Iranians are very frustrated by that reality. Free speech has not been there; the opportunity for the elected leaders to govern has not been there. The situation for Iranians now is that many of them want change, but they have seen a violent revolution in the recent past. They know the costs to a society of a violent revolution: they know they will lose a

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[221] Canada introduced a toughly worded resolution on the human rights situation in Iran in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) which was approved on November 21, 2003 by a vote of 73 to 49 with 50 abstentions (for details see http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/gashc3771.doc.htm). The resolution was subsequently approved by the full General Assembly in December 2003.

[222] "Iran: Discontent and Disarray", October 15, 2003, p. 2 and 15.

> generation, they know many people will die unnecessarily, and they're nervous about unleashing that. What we can do is communicate as clearly as possible to the Iranians, whether it's by engaging their government, which is sometimes the right way to do this, or by disengaging from them, which is also sometimes the right way to do it, that we support the aspiration of those 70% of the Iranian people who clearly want change. I think that's the best way we can help there, and I believe those people will eventually prevail. But it's going to take time, and there isn't an obvious route one can point to immediately right now.[223]

In short, this is a crucial testing moment in relations with Iran that calls for active watchful and skilful diplomacy by Canada.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Canada should strongly protest the February 2004 electoral process that disqualified serving parliamentarians and appeal to Iran to conduct open and fair democratic elections. Canada should also continue to work closely with other countries in multilateral forums, and with democratic forces inside Iran, including where still possible through parliamentary and political channels, to press for improvements in Iran's human rights performance.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Government of Canada should vigorously continue its efforts to achieve a full accounting from the Government of Iran for the illegal detention, torture and murder of Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi, and should pursue all avenues of redress that will result in a just and satisfactory resolution.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Canada should at the same time explore ways to increase constructive contacts with Iranian civil society through educational, cultural and other exchanges, private sector and NGO links.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Canada should continue to put pressure on Iran to abide fully by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and

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[223] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1145).

specifically, to implement the undertakings made to the International Atomic Energy Agency following Iran's admission of non-compliance in October 2003.

Saudi Arabia

> *Saudi Arabia is in the throes of a crisis. The economy cannot keep pace with population growth, the welfare state is rapidly deteriorating, and regional and sectarian resentments are rising to the fore. These problems have been exacerbated by an upsurge in radical Islamic activism. Many agree that the Saudi political system must somehow evolve, but a profound cultural schizophrenia prevents the elite from agreeing on the specifics of reform.*
>
> – Michael Scott Doran, "The Saudi Paradox"[224]

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not only the most important and populous country of the Arabian peninsula, it also occupies what Canada's ambassador Roderick Bell referred to as "the epicentre of Islam". The reigning monarch King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud also holds the title of "Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques" (of Makkah and Madinah). Saudi society is probably more shaped by strict adherence to the Muslim faith than any other country in the Arab and Muslim world. Everything is judged in religious terms and there are also "religious police" to enforce public practice. Although there is a significant Shi'a minority (approximately 10%), the great majority of Saudi Arabia's 24 million people follow Sunni Islam; moreover, the dominant ideology that infuses the Saudi religious and political establishment adheres to a puritanical school of Sunni Islam known as "Wahhabism".[225] As Michael Doran puts it succinctly: "Wahhabism is the foundation of an entire political system, and everyone with a stake in the status quo can be expected to rally around it when push comes to shove".[226]

The present Saudi Arabian state is not much more than 70 years old. Following the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, a tribal dynastic leader known as Ibn Saud gradually gained control of most of the Arabian peninsula. The

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[224] *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2004, p. 36; see also "Whither Saudi Arabia?", *National Post*, January 5, 2004; F. Gregory Gause III, "Saudi Arabia Challenged", *Current History*, January 2004, p. 21-24. For a comprehensive assessment see Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century*, two volumes, Praeger Publishers, New York, 2003.

[225] Abdu l-Wahhab founded a conservative Muslim religious movement in the mid-18th century that calls for an Islamic renewal based on moral cleansing and removal of all innovations to Islam. Strict Wahhabism tends to regard those outside its practice as heathens or enemies of the one true faith. See Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, Islamic Publications International, 2002; also "Le Wahhabisme et l'histoire de l'Arabie", *Monde arabe Maghgreb-Machrek*, No. 174, October-December 2001, Special issue on "L'Arabie saoudite et la péninsule après le 11 septembre: défis et enjeux d'une région en crise", p. 19-37.

[226] "The Saudi Paradox", p. 51.

Kingdom was established in 1932 (oil was discovered a few years later in 1938) and the "House of Saud" — today's royal family numbering some 7,000 princes and growing — has ruled ever since. In the consolidation of the monarchy, the Saud family entered into an alliance with Wahhabism, a political-religious marriage of convenience that, as noted above, prevails to the present day but also circumscribes the regime's ability to adapt to pressures for change.[227]

These pressures are escalating and the strains showing, especially in the wake of September 11, 2001 — when 15 of the 19 hijackers were identified as Saudi citizens — and even more since the May and November 2003 terrorist attacks inside Saudi Arabia itself that have clearly targeted the regime.[228] The May 12 bombings in the capital of Riyadh were a wake-up call that was impossible for Saudi authorities to ignore and that have galvanized a serious domestic counter-terrorism effort. The country is also confronting an existential dilemma in that political, intellectual and socio-cultural development has not kept pace with petroleum-fuelled economic growth.[229] A conflicted unequal and undemocratic society, tied to both traditional religion and Western money and technologies, is being pulled simultaneously both forward by the purveyors of a cell-phone consumer culture[230] and backward by the staunch defenders of Wahhabist virtue.

Saudi Arabia makes no pretence of being a democracy. There are no elections of any kind. But, notwithstanding the detention of several prominent reform proponents in March 2004,[231] there have been signs, albeit small and hesitant, of a social and political evolution taking place under stress. These include:

- Consideration of the succession and the need for generational changes within the leadership gerontocracy;

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[227] See Olivier Da Lage, "Entre les religieux et la famille royale, le malaise saoudien", *Monde arabe Maghreb-Machrek*, October-December 2001, p. 3-17.

[228] See "How safe is the House of Saud?", *The Economist*, November 15, 2003, p. 43-44. See also Alain Gresh, "Les grands écarts de l'Arabie saoudite", *Le Monde diplomatique*, June 2003, p. 16-17.

[229] For a succinct survey of reform prospects see "Saudi Arabia: Adapt or die", *The Economist*, March 6, 2004, p. 42-44.

[230] The mass adoption of new communications technologies also carries potentially progressive political effects. One report on the political ferment in the Kingdom cites a journalist as saying "Now that cell phones and access to e-mail have become widespread in Saudi Arabia, nothing can stay hidden any more." (Alain Gresh, "Balbutiements de l'opinion publique en Arabie saoudite," *Le Monde diplomatique*, May 2002, p. 14.)

[231] Dominic Evans, "Saudis detained for Urging Reform," and "U.S. Condemns Detention of Saudi Reformers," *National Post*, March 17 and March 18, 2004. See also "Saudi Arabia: The limits of reform," *The Economist*, March 25, 2004.

- Acknowledging the great social demographic problem of young people entering the labour force in a climate of diminishing average per capita incomes, as well as overcoming the dependency on foreign workers;[232]
- Reforming education including religious education;[233]
- Saudi women acquiring identity cards and becoming an economic if not yet political force (for example, there are 4,000 businesswomen in Jeddah with bank accounts of $11.5 billion);[234]
- The existence of increasingly vocal press criticism[235] and the holding of a recent human rights conference;[236]
- Less visible public presence of the religious police ("mutaween") since the terrorist attacks of May 12, 2003;

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[232] As stated in an *Arab News* editorial: 'Everyone knows that unemployment is the big issue in Saudi Arabia. With half the population under 15, jobs have to be created for the mass of young Saudis soon to enter the work force. Otherwise, there is going to be a social and economic calamity. No country can afford a mass of unemployed, disgruntled youth. ... The remittances home from expat workers are estimated at a staggering SR70 billion a year. That money could be working for the Saudi economy, growing it, if all those jobs were in Saudi hands." ("Attitude Problem", October 22, 2003.)

[233] Although a recent summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council, a body linking the six oil-rich Arab monarchies including Saudi Arabia pledged to reform religious education, this remains an extremely sensitive subject. Efforts by the Kingdom in this direction through Crown Prince Abdullah's "national dialogue" and reform measures passed by the country's appointed consultative council have provoked vehement objections from Wahhabist elites. (See "Arab education: The risks of reform", *The Economist*, January 24, 2003, p. 41-42.)

[234] A few Saudi business and professional women have been invited to take part in national gatherings and events such as a major economic conference held in Jeddah in January 2004. It is also possible to see critical articles in the local press. (See, for example, Maram Abdul Rahman Al-Watan, "Denying Women Rights", *Arab News*, October 22, 2003, p. 3.) At the same time, even the presence of women in such forums still brings condemnation from Saudi religious authorities. (See "Saudi women toil for equality in the workplace", and "Saudi cleric decries call for women's rights", *National Post*, January 19 and January 22, 2004.)

[235] Severe restrictions on independent journalism remain commonplace however. See, for example, Alan Freeman, "New veil, old face", *The Globe and Mail*, October 31, 2003.

[236] The conference entitled "Human Rights in Times of Peace and War" took place from October 14-15, 2003. No independent human rights organizations existed in the Kingdom; however, a 41-member National Human Rights Association was formed in early March 2004 (Dominic Evans, "First Saudi human rights group to abide by *sharia* law", *National Post*, March 10, 2004, p. A12). A Dutch academic delegate to that conference later wrote of it: "The presentations by formal speakers certainly confirmed the suspicion of a propaganda event." Yet despite that and "the overwhelming impression of an almost complete lack of political and cultural freedom", he acknowledged "that the winds of change are blowing through the peninsula too. The politico-religious coalition between the ruling monarchy and the Wahabi ulamaa is under severe strain." (Bas de Gaay Fortman, "Stashed Women in Saudi Arabia", *Netherlands School of Human Rights Research Newsletter*, 7:4, December 2003, p. 7-8.)

- The first public demonstration seen in many years in October 2003 (though many were arrested);
- Trial balloons raising the possibility of local elections, perhaps eventually to the Kingdom's Consultative Council, the 120-member all-male "Majlis Ash Shura";
- An evolution in the make-up of the Shura Council towards more secular educated elites (currently only 10% have degrees in religious studies; 65% have PhDs or MDs and 87% have attended Western universities).

Notwithstanding these tentative moves, Saudi Arabia continues to labour under an increasingly negative image in the West, not only in the popular media but also in more academic publications. Saudi Arabia's social-religious conservatism and extreme restrictions on civil rights, for women in particular, make it an easy target. More ominously, the kingdom is accused of being a danger to rather than a friendly ally of Western countries. A frequent charge is that Saudi oil money has been used to export Wahhabism worldwide and in effect to aid the very Islamist political militancy that not only threatens non-Muslim "infidels" but could perversely bring about the downfall of the Wahhabist regime itself.[237]

The Committee heard claims of this sort in testimony prior to its visit to Saudi Arabia. For example, Salim Mansur contended that "the money that has come out of Saudi Arabia and has gone to the mosques has carried the bacillus of what I call the neo-fascist variant that has grown up in the Muslim world and has gone through the mosque system. ... Right across Canada the mosque imams are all funded by Saudi Arabia".[238] Üner Turgay stated that Saudi Arabia "in the last twenty years has been ... pouring millions and billions of dollars into spreading Wahhabi Islam all across the country, building hundreds and hundreds of mosques, and sending thousands and thousands of brochures and information about Wahhabi. They have certainly affected the interpretation of Islam from one corner of the world to the other".[239]

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[237] See, for example, Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror*, Doubleday, 2002; Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, Regnery Publishing, 2003; Robert Baer, "The Fall of the House of Saud", *Atlantic Monthly*, May 2003, p. 53-62; Brian Eads, "Le double jeu de l'Arabie saoudite," *Sélection du Reader's Digest*, 113:20, November 2003, p. 120-130; "The Roots of Global Terror: How the Saudis Made Jihad an International Industry", *U.S. News and World Report*, December 15, 2003, p. 18-32; "Financing Islamist terrorism", *Strategic Comments*, 9:10, December 2003; Régis Le Sommier, "Mensonges d'Arabie", *L'Actualité*, January 2004, p. 22-24.

[238] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (1055).

[239] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1210).

As for prospects for real liberalizing and democratizing “regime change” within Saudi Arabia, asked about this after the Committee’s return from meetings in Saudi Arabia, Noah Feldman responded that

> the Saudis themselves know they need good governance, but they will only respond with more democratization if we’re rather specific in saying “Do it however you want, but begin to devolve power to the people”. … The Saudi royal family’s only hope for maintaining itself as a constitutional monarchy in the long run, rather than as a relic that eventually goes the way of other uncompromising monarchies of the region, like that of the Shah of Iran for example, is to realize that they need to create a direct link between themselves and their citizens that is not mediated through the opinions of the clerics. As long as it goes from the royal family to the clerics down to the people, the royal family will be hamstrung; they won’t be able to improve things.[240]

Dr. Feldman also made the point that a government with the kind of oil wealth that Saudi Arabia possesses is not “going to democratize purely on the basis of internal pressures” because it will “always be able to buy off” its opponents. Recent indications of small openings to reform “have more to do with responding to pressure from the outside. And that kind of pressure is best delivered behind closed doors, frankly, not by bombastic hand banging.”[241]

For Canada, the question of how to move Saudi Arabia towards a feasible path of political and human rights reforms has been gravely complicated, as in the case of Iran, by bilateral tensions over the treatment of a Canadian citizen in detention. Indeed the death sentence imposed on William Sampson (who appeared before the Committee on the same day as Dr. Feldman) and Mr. Sampson’s repeated allegations of torture against the Saudi authorities have probably received more Canadian media attention in the past several years than any other aspect of Canada’s relations with the Arab and Muslim world. We will return to this matter in more detail below. At this point what is important to note is that, notwithstanding Mr. Sampson’s release from a Saudi prison in early August 2003, Canada’s ability to engage Saudi Arabia in a constructive dialogue, and vice versa, will be impeded as long as there are unresolved allegations of injustice and mistreatment hanging over the case.

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[240] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1220).

[241] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1210).

Witness Views in Saudi Arabia

The Committee began its meetings in the important port of Jeddah, on the Red Sea near the holy city of Makkah, at the headquarters of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The timing was propitious coming just after the OIC's 10th Summit held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.[242] Discussions with Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Ezzat Mufti, Senior Advisor to the Secretary General, Ambassador Sa'aduddin Al Tayeb and other senior officials provided an opportunity to exchange views on current international problems affecting Muslim nations. Topping their list of concerns were the impacts of terrorism, the post-war occupation of Iraq, and of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — which, not surprisingly, Ambassador Mufti largely blamed on the policies of the current Israeli government for "making peace unreachable". Ambassador Mufti argued that the OIC has had a clear position against terrorism — which violates Islam's precepts — and is calling for a conference to define the meaning of terrorism. He was careful, however, to distinguish that from justified Palestinian national resistance to occupation. He also criticized negative press treatment of Islam in the West — a familiar refrain in other meetings as well — and what he considered were wrongful accusations associating "Muslim charitable foundations" with terrorism. On Iraq, he underlined the OIC's unanimous opposition to the war and to any subsequent military participation by a member country (i.e., Turkey).

On a more positive note, Ambassador Mufti emphasized the OIC's desire to play a broader international role in the advancement of relations among Muslim nations and with other countries in the pursuit of dialogue goals. He indicated that Canada is "respected as fair-minded by OIC members", appreciated for its moderate "balanced and farsighted" positions, and also for its potential role as a neighbour of the United States. He urged that ideas be explored for further constructive exchanges or working groups on relations with the Muslim world.

In Jeddah, the Committee was also able to meet with Saudi businesswomen from the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce, and separately with prominent male members of the business community. The group of eight women was led by Chamber Deputy Secretary General Fatin Bandaggi, Founder and

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[242] Founded in 1969 with an explicit purpose of freeing Palestine from Israeli occupation, the now 57-member OIC has enlarged its mandate to stress "Islamic solidarity" and cooperation among Muslim countries on many fronts. The OIC strongly denounced the September 11 attacks. But it has also strongly opposed the military intervention in Iraq and any postwar military participation in Iraq (e.g., by member state Turkey). Iraq's Interim Governing Council was however represented at the Kuala Lumpur summit. The OIC remains primarily a useful discussion forum, albeit a rather weak and disputatious one that passes resolutions without means to bind consensus or implement them.

Director of the Saudi Businesswomen Centre.[243] Women continue to face many restrictions in all walks of life including in doing business, and a growing debate over reforms questions whether these constraints are the result of Islamic duties or of Saudi culture and traditions.[244] In that regard, these women spoke of a need "to differentiate between traditions and religion", noting the big differences among Islamic societies and that Islam accords full rights to both sexes. They saw Saudi women as being "on the move", getting involved in the local development committee for the first time, etc. Still their remarks reflected some ambivalence on next steps. "We need so much education ... [but] we're not after anything to do with politics", one said. They would welcome representation in the "Shura" (the appointed advisory council to the King) but this is not a current priority.

An American expatriate member and Muslim convert, Ms. Maria Arena, a consultant and lecturer in communications, spoke of arriving here as a Muslim but without any of the Arabian "cultural baggage". She stated that for her wearing the headscarf was a "liberating" personal decision even if others might find that strange. Islam in her understanding has given rights to women and what is needed is for them to know and exercise those rights. In Saudi Arabia she had observed "a very vibrant women's society below the surface" and urged outsiders not to ignore that reality. Another participant stated that "women are more outspoken than men in the media" and indicated a continuing intention to push for reforms when she commented: "Don't wait for it to happen. Make it happen."

Other members worried about the negative external perceptions of Saudi society. And after emphasizing the importance of Islam's "culture of ethics and heritage", Mrs. Bandaggi stated provocatively: "In my opinion, women suffer more in the west than in the east." But she and the others did acknowledge a number of challenges facing women in business — "we have a lot of barriers". They welcomed signs of generational change, of professions opening up to women and other signals of opening up, such as women becoming present in annual economic forums and increasingly speaking and lobbying on their own behalf. Women, they argued need to protest the exploitation of Islam in throwing up impediments to their expanded participation. In overcoming backward social or tribal practices it is "very important to educate women first on their rights under Islam."

The men's business group included prominent community leaders, often with ties to North America (both educational and business), and some who have been outspoken in the Saudi media arguing against the influence of religious radicalism and in favour of liberalizing reforms. In conversations they also praised the image of Canada as having benefited from the decision to stay out of the Iraq war, and encouraged a larger Canadian presence and role differentiated from that of the U.S., stressing the desirability for more exchanges in the educational and professional fields. Mr. Amr Khashoggi, Chairman and CEO of Amkest Group, put it that Canada comes off well compared to the U.S. "bull in a china shop" approach, stating "there is more room now for Canadian companies to do business here. It's a window of opportunity for Canada."

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[243] The Chamber's female section was established in 1998. Its Secretary General is Princess Adila bint Abdullah, daughter of the Crown Prince. Jeddah is in advance of the rest of the Kingdom. It was noted that women own 35% of the Jeddah economy, in part as a result of the inheritance system.

[244] On occasion, women have made themselves heard in this debate. In September 2003, 51 women were among the 306 signatories of a petition to urge Crown Prince Abdullah to expedite reforms.

Participants were concerned that when terrorists hijack religion, the whole society not be punished. They clearly resented "clash" ideologies and negative media stereotypes as well as mistrusting American policies and motives. Fahed Almugairin, Chairman of Saudi Masar (a high-tech marketing company), who had lived some years in the U.S., lamented that: "There's a new empire now saying we want to democratize the world." While in his view most Muslims are very tolerant, he was less optimistic now than 10 years ago. Osama El Khereiji, a Certified Public Accountant with Polaris International (and a son studying at Trent University), was concerned about the impression left by double standards of treatment (e.g., the denial or rights to detainees at Guantanamo) — "without equal justice ... Bin Laden is a phenomenon that will continue to happen". In his view, "Muslims have been the major victims of 9/11." Yes, there may be a problem in the mosques, but there are hundreds of thousands of mosques. Why target Saudi Arabia but ignore U.S. double standards? He also saw the "U.S. mental block" on the Israel-Palestine conflict as being "a driver of 9/11". To move forward we need to "find a way to increase exchanges", to resist increasing security barriers closing these avenues, and to strengthen the UN system rather than relying on the strongest state.

The group readily acknowledged their country's own internal challenges. The problem now, stated Mr. Khashoggi, is with the 'people-ware': "We didn't have much chance to develop the human software ... we are cognizant of the issues and want to develop the solutions, but these must be home-grown and at a pace that the population can accept" (suggesting that the people may be more conservative than their leaders). Fahed Almugairin also referred to "a lot of poverty that we have been closing our eyes to" and the need to "fight extremism among ourselves by tackling these issues". Participants agreed that the terrorist attacks involving Saudis were a wake-up call for a society that had been too lenient with violent expressions of Islamism. They also worried about differences being exaggerated by extremists on all sides. In Khashoggi's words: "Do we have the ability to respect each other's differences?"

In the capital of Riyadh, the Committee held several high-level meetings with members of the Majlis Ash Shura's Committees on Foreign Affairs and Islamic Affairs, the Shura Council's Chairman, and with Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Saud Al-Faisal. Dr. Saleh Al-Malik explained the Council's growth in numbers and evolution in functions and powers since its 1994 establishment.[245] Reform was in the air during our visit, including the possibility of partial election of Majlis members, giving it increased powers over state finances, appointing women members, and televising some debates.

Majlis members were anxious to move on from the recent bilateral difficulties caused by the Sampson case (see below) and to pursue cooperation with Canada. Canada was seen as having clean hands compared to some of the big nations. And as put by the Dr. Abdullah Bin Saleh Al-Obeid (a former Secretary General of the Islamic World League): "We do highly appreciate your independent stands on Arab and international issues". Like the business people, they were also preoccupied by the response to terrorism, from which Dr. Al-Obeid observed that Saudi Arabia has suffered "more than any other country". He and others rejected any association of Saudi terrorists with Islam or the regime. The September 11 hijackers "were against the Kingdom before they were against international law … the King cannot be held responsible for what they did". Not only was 9/11 "a disaster for everyone", stated Dr. Abdul Aziz Bin Ibrahim Al-Faiz, "We were a target of a media campaign that reminded me of the darkest days of the Cold War." If Saudis are accused of being supporters of terrorism when they are its victims, that mistake will be Bin Laden's success, leading to a weakening of ties with the West that will make matters more insecure and for which we will all pay. Rather than focusing blame on some general stereotype of Saudi Islam, outsiders should listen to what the proper spokespersons for the Muslim majority are saying. At the same time, there was acknowledgement that the country is going through tremendous changes and economic reforms, so managing internal tensions is as important as outside perceptions.

The theme of rebuilding relations with Canada, including through more parliamentary exchanges, and working together to overcome voices of extremism, including religious extremism, was continued in the meeting with Shura Council Chairman Dr. Salih Bin Abdullah Bin Hemaid.[246] The Committee's next meeting with Foreign Minister Prince Al-Faisal confirmed the Saudi government's interest in restoring and expanding relations. He also made a point about the importance of "truth between friends — Your true friend is the person who tells you the truth".

Prince Saud observed that terrorism has been a preoccupying subject for Saudi Arabia in a region that has been wracked by instability for the past five or six decades. The Middle East must move beyond an endless succession of conflicts, as Europe has managed to do. However, the area is now rife with extremism, and hopes for justice for the Palestinians keep being dashed (mentioning the latest Israeli military incursion into the West Bank). Saudi Arabia has been warning of the results, and as yesterday's "inefficient" terrorists have been replaced by more "professional terrorists". "It's not surprising that the seeds of terrorism have grown in the Middle East. ... We're waging a domestic war on terrorism of immense proportions; all of which is going on while we're experiencing major socio-economic transformation."

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[245] The Saudi Shura Council — 120 males appointed by the King for four-year terms — formally reviews laws, regulations, reports and international treaties submitted to it by the government. Its decisions are advisory not binding.

[246] Dr. Bin Hemaid is also a teacher and mufti (one of the Friday imams) at the Holy Mosque of Makkah Al-Mokaramah.

According to Prince Saud, the root causes of terrorism in Saudi Arabia are not to be found in its "Wahhabi" doctrines but in "the lack of resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian question" and the influence of "militaristic quasi-religious sects". The Saudi government "has been very clear in its negating of the religious basis of the radicals." He referred to a speech by Crown Prince Abdullah in Pakistan negating this "deviant part of Islam". In Prince Saud's words, "it's a tough fight that is our duty. ... Every day we're catching cells and finding arms caches". In that regard, he appealed for closer cooperation with Canada and the international community. In particular, he would like to see a better exchange of "raw information" among intelligence agencies, and on a timely basis *before* major terrorist incidents happen.

Turning to the situation in postwar Iraq, Prince Saud stressed the importance of establishing civilian control as soon as possible and going after the real criminals. Rejecting all Baathists (functionaries from the old regime) will leave too few local people to run the state. Invasion and occupation cannot by themselves establish a better society; a new Iraq must be built on law and new leadership, otherwise there will be a reversion to chaos or dictatorship.

More generally, Prince Saud argued that the West should focus on promoting "good governance" in the region rather than trying to prescribe some ideal form of "democracy", adding: "Separation of church and state ... means nothing here." In his view, Saudi Arabia has to develop its own forms of best governance (observing that there were fewer restrictions before Saudi Arabia became a nation-state and perhaps "we have to retrieve [that] participation"). Reform will have to take into account social sensitivities that remain. He took the example of the introduction of women diplomats into the foreign ministry, to which radicals had reacted by using their Internet Web sites to denounce the ministry as a "den of sin". Dress codes exist for men as well as for women. The watershed in terms of women's rights will be reached through education, and it is women themselves who will fight for their rights. However, he cautioned that Saudi society is "not experimental" in nature and that in light of popular fears of the permissive effects of modernization, expanding women's participation needs to be done in ways that maintain "social cohesion". Indeed, it is "a strange phenomenon" that, in his assessment, a majority of Saudi men would vote to give women the vote, whereas a majority of women would vote against doing so.

On strengthening bilateral ties with Canada, Prince Saud stressed that: "Students from Saudi Arabia are now pouring into Canada where they find comfort and welcome" (3,000 in the medical field alone). This reinforced the message of other Saudi interlocutors on the importance they attach to educational access and exchanges in building the relationship.

The issues of strengthening educational, inter-cultural and inter-faith relations were also highlighted in subsequent meetings with Dr. Hamid Bin Ahmad Al-Rifaie[247], President of the International Islamic Forum for Dialogue and Assistant Secretary General of the World Muslim Congress, and with academics from King Saud University and Imam Muhammed Bin Saud Islamic University. Dr. Al-Rifaie concentrated on promoting open dialogue based both on what is common among cultures as well as an acceptance of diverse cultural and political outlooks. His argument resisted accepting a Western form of secularization as necessary to develop an Islamic form of liberalism and democracy which would still respect the faith element that evidently remains part of the Saudi view of the political contract between government and citizens.

The university-based academics were remarkably candid about the challenges of educational, liberalizing and democratizing reforms in their country. Some openly admitted the need "to change the political map", as one put it, observing that religious power increases when political power is seen to weaken. Other "time bombs" included the threats posed by tribal overlords and religious radicals. While acknowledging the need for reforms to Saudi institutions, including religious and educational institutions, they also appealed for Canadian help in counteracting and moving beyond media stereotypes that portray Saudi Arabia as a closed static society when in fact it is experiencing rapid change. Dr. Mishary Al-Muairi, a Professor of Mass Communications at King Saud University observed the advances in women's education, the huge numbers of Saudi students abroad, and an "interpenetration of media growing faster than anywhere else in the world". In supporting reform he advised — "Don't leave it all to the politicians ... encourage many delegations to come to Saudi universities from Canada to help foster understanding."

Other participants reinforced an appeal to expand academic exchanges and other forms of contact taking into account the strategic place of Saudi Arabia within Islam. As one put it: "It is very important that our friends in the West help us in our battle." Failing to understand and work with the Muslim majority would be to play into the hands of the radicals. And as another participant noted: "Western countries cannot alone win the battle against terrorism." Of course Saudi Arabia has internal problems. Reference was made to over 1,000 imams having been removed for extremist sympathies. But these are only a small minority. (Some radical clerics have also recanted extremist views. At the climax of the latest hajj pilgrimage in early 2004, the Kingdom's foremost religious leader, Grand Mufti Sheik Abdul Aziz al-Sheik, also strongly denounced terrorism while defending Wahhabism.[248])

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[247] During 2004 Dr. Al-Rifaie also shares the presidency of the Islamic-Catholic Liaison Committee with Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, president of the Vatican's Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue.

A common view among the Committee's interlocutors was that there is also a need for better outside understanding of Saudi realities. As Dr. Abdulla Al-Askar deftly turned the tables in responding to a suggestion about creating a centre for Western studies in the Kingdom — "We know a lot more about Canada than the average Canadian knows about Saudi Arabia." That said, it is clear that Saudi professionals are keen to pursue further educational contacts. And in that regard, the facilitation of student visas has emerged as an important issue in the wake of 9/11, with Canada perceived as being more friendly than its neighbour to Saudi students. In the words of Dr. Khalil Al-Khalil: "We don't want the U.S. security syndrome to be transferred to Canada."

The Case of William Sampson and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia

William Sampson, one of thousands of Canadians working in Saudi Arabia, was arrested in December 2000 and charged with conspiring in the murder of a British man. In early 2001 a confession was shown on Saudi television that Mr. Sampson alleges was extracted after severe torture. Mr. Sampson was subsequently found guilt of the crime which carries a death sentence that is carried out in Saudi Arabia by public beheading. Protesting the injustice of the conviction and his ongoing mistreatment in prison, Mr. Sampson refused cooperation with the Saudi authorities until his sudden release on August 7, 2003 along with several other convicted prisoners in the case. During the period of his incarceration there were Canadian efforts made to intercede on his behalf — including by a member of this Committee and by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs with special emphasis on Canadians abroad. Although Mr. Sampson has expressed gratitude to Canadian politicians who took up his cause, he has alleged that Canadian officials failed to offer adequate support to him and his family during the time of his prison ordeal. He repeated in detail these allegations and demands for redress in the course of dramatic testimony before the Committee following our return from Saudi Arabia.[249]

During our meetings in Jeddah and Riyadh we found little willingness to criticize Mr. Sampson's conviction. (However one interlocutor early on did express the hope that "sometimes a good can come out of evil", suggesting that the question of Mr. Sampson's individual treatment as a foreign national might help to bring broader attention to the rights and conditions of prisoners in

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[248] "Abandon terror: top Saudi cleric", *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 1, 2004, p. A10.

[249] See *Evidence*, Meeting No. 57, November 6, 2003.

Saudi Arabia.) Saudi political officials regretted the postponement of scheduled bilateral visits due to upset (on their part) over the Sampson controversy and the negative publicity generated in Canada by his allegations of wrongful conviction and torture. However there was no indication of a willingness to accept that those allegations might have merit.

In the course of the Committee's meeting with the Chairman and other members of the Shura Council it was apparent that the Saudi view continues to be that Mr. Sampson was found guilty of murder according to their judicial procedures and it would not have been proper to interfere with those. They had sought to cooperate with Canadian authorities; however, any remedy for Mr. Sampson under their Islamic justice system was dependent on seeking an agreement with the British family of the murdered man (which was key to his eventual release). They claimed that Mr. Sampson showed no appreciation for efforts made on his behalf and was non-cooperative. It was clear that his subsequent allegations were strongly resented. In their eyes, Mr. Sampson's guilty verdict was a result of a due process of law and Saudi Arabia has been unfairly maligned. As was stated: "We believe he was used by Canadian politicians and media to distort the image of the Kingdom".

It is to state the obvious that repair to the bilateral relationship will remain a challenge until justice is seen to be done in the matter of Mr. Sampson. The Committee takes the view that the Saudi government has a responsibility to thoroughly investigate and respond to the extremely serious allegations of denial of basic rights and use of torture. In that regard, the Canadian government should also take every opportunity to remind the Saudi authorities of that responsibility as part of their domestic and international legal obligations, including under the Convention Against Torture. Ratifying human rights treaties is not enough; they must be adhered to in practice.

We are not calling for a counterproductive confrontational approach to the issue of Saudi Arabia's respect for the human rights of a Canadian citizen and for human rights more generally. Justice for Mr. Sampson and progress on human rights reforms should be presented as of benefit to all parties. At the same time, Canada's position must be clear in standing on the side of justice and human rights. In February 2004, Mr. Sampson and six British men who were detained with him in Saudi Arabia announced a civil suit in the British courts seeking damages and compensation from Saudi Arabia for the torture they allege they suffered.[250] If Mr. Sampson and his family were to consider pursuing a possible additional option of launching a legal complaint within Saudi Arabia, the Canadian government should fully support such an undertaking.

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[250] Kim Lunman, "Sampson, British prisoners to sue captors," *The Globe and Mail*, February 25, 2004, p. A11.

Directions for Canadian Policy

As indicated by the troubling case of Mr. Sampson and its lingering aftermath, moving Canada's relations with Saudi Arabia to a more constructive and harmonious plane will take effective diplomacy and actions in good faith. We also recognize the importance of Saudi Arabia in the Muslim world and as country with which Canada and thousands of Canadians have significant ties. There are mutual interests as well as irritants. There is a need for more cooperation in the common struggle against terrorism. There is a need to engage Saudi Arabians on the reform challenges — educational, socio-economic, legal and political — that many Saudis themselves recognize are overdue, but that confront their institutions with real difficulties in being able to successfully manage peaceful transitions. There is a need for Saudi Arabia to participate in international dialogues on the larger issues of relations with the Muslim world raised in this report. There is a need for a facilitation of the kinds of learning and cultural exchanges that we must hope will contribute to a better, more secure, future for the citizens of both our countries.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Government of Canada should urge Saudi Arabia to address the sources of terrorism and religious extremism within its borders, and offer Canada's cooperation in common efforts to combat such terrorism and extremism. The Government should also actively pursue opportunities to promote dialogue and to build ties with Saudi Arabia. In particular, Canada should:

- **Strongly encourage changes in the direction of human rights, democratic, and educational reforms as being in Saudi Arabia's interest;**
- **Explore increased intellectual, educational and cultural as well as political exchanges.**

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Government of Canada should at the same time continue to impress upon the Government of Saudi Arabia the need for it to conduct a full investigation of the allegations of miscarriage of justice and torture made by Canadian citizen William Sampson, and the need for Saudi Arabia to comply fully with its international human rights obligations. Until justice is done, and seen to be done, bilateral relations will not be able to develop as constructively as we believe is in the mutual interest of both countries.

Egypt

With 75 million people, the vast majority of whom are Sunni Muslims, Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East and North Africa. As a relatively poor country, Egypt is challenged to provide for the needs of a growing young population. It is also the inheritor of one of the greatest and oldest of human civilizations as well as being a renowned repository of learning and culture within the Arab and Muslim world.

Modern Egypt is burdened by the legacies of a "pharaonic", colonial, and state-led Arab nationalist past.[251] And although Egypt was the first Arab state to make peace with Israel, this "cold peace" remains controversial. Indeed its author President Anwar al-Sadat was assassinated in 1981 and Islamist radicals have used terror tactics in their struggles against an authoritarian, repressive state. An emergency law curbing civil rights has been in place for decades. Political power is highly concentrated in the hands of President Hosni Mubarak, in office since taking over from Sadat in 1981. Egypt has in effect a one-party political system dominated by the governing National Democratic Party that took 388 of the 444 elected seats in the People's Assembly in November 2000 elections.[252] However, a potential succession crisis looms in the midst of widespread scepticism about the capacity of the system to undertake meaningful internal political reforms.[253]

The "Egyptian model" was described by former Canadian ambassador Michael Bell as "no independent elections, little pluralism. There's a Parliament, there are elections, but those elections are largely controlled. A small number of opposition members are elected, and the press has some elements of freedom so you can say here's a criticism of the government for this or that policy, but it's very strictly curtailed."[254] There is a large state security system and thousands of political prisoners. Mr. Bell cited the high-profile case of human rights and democracy activist Saad Ibrahim, "an Egyptian intellectual imprisoned by the legal authorities of the Mubarak regime because he accepted money from the United States to run his NGO." While not as bad as Saddam Hussein's Iraq where Ibrahim would have been killed, the effect is: "To draw a red line and say that these civil society reformers cannot go beyond a certain point, and if they do go beyond a certain point in fostering pluralism, they will pay a price."[255]

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[251] Egypt emerged as a post-colonial republic in the 1950s under the charismatic leadership of General Gamel Abdel Nasser, who instituted a one-party state and who proclaimed a vision of pan-Arab socialism. (Egypt and Syria were briefly merged from 1958-61.) On the societal effects of the hangover from the past, see Fouad Ajami, *The Dream Palace of the Arabs: A Generation's Odyssey*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1998 Chapter Four "In the Land of Egypt".

[252] Another 10 members are appointed by the President to five-year terms. There is also an upper chamber, the 264-member Shura Council, that is one-third appointed by the president. In both houses a certain minimum of those elected are required to represent the interests of "labor and farmers".

[253] A briefing paper by the International Crisis Group observes that:

> The legacy of Egypt's present leadership will largely depend on its ability to develop the institutions and processes by which the leader is chosen. Indeed, with the question of presidential succession now firmly on the political agenda, the regime needs to consider how to secure wider public consent for the election procedure and enact reforms required to ensure that it is accepted as legitimate by public opinion. (*The Challenge of Political Reform: Egypt After the Iraq War*, Middle East Briefing, September 30, 2003, p. 3. See also "After Mubarak: who's next?", *The Economist*, December 6, 2003, p. 42.)

[254] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1135).

A major question overhanging the subject of Egyptian political reform is whether it can ultimately accommodate a growing socially based Islamic opposition that feeds off popular anger at the failings of the post-Nasserist secular state. The regime's attempts to control religious influence and to suppress religious radicalism may contain such opposition in the short run but do not answer rising demands for democratic and social reforms. The potentially moderating role of the Muslim Brotherhood, that originated in Egypt in the 1920s and has spread throughout the Arab Muslim world, bears watching in that regard. In recent years the Brotherhood has eschewed political violence and sought to work within the political system (even if in the process perhaps losing some ground in Egypt to more radical Islamist groups such as the Al-Gama'at Al-Islamiyyah, responsible for the terrorist attacks on foreign tourists at Luxor in November 1997).[256] What appears to be a genuine transformation is significant given the Brotherhood's ideological influence throughout the Muslim world as indicated to the Committee by Mazen Chouab of the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations.[257] Yet in Egypt, although the Brotherhood is in effect the largest opposition grouping in the People's Assembly, its elected parliamentary members must sit as independents because the Brotherhood is still not a legally recognized party.

Even as Arab autocracies like Egypt continue to try to put a lid on democratic and Islamic challenges to their rule, a broader point is that they are losing the battle for people's hearts and minds. Michael Bell outlined the situation with reference to Egypt in a way that deserves citing at length.

> What the Islamic movements have done — the Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, in Egypt — is offer welfare services, education, health care, ... more effectively and in a more timely way than the government can. So it's gaining adherents by its effectiveness. It doesn't suffer from sclerosis. That effectiveness is very important in getting people's loyalties.
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> Middle East regimes would be happy to be rid of the Muslim Brotherhood if they could, even if they're tolerated now ... because they object to those organizations as much as they do to Saad Eddin Ibrahim or so-called leftists

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[255] Ibid.

[256] See John Walsh, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: Understanding Centrist Islam", *Harvard International Review*, Winter 2003, p. 32-36; also Wendy Kristianson, "Désarroi des islamistes modérés", *Le Monde diplomatique*, September 2002, p. 14-15.

[257] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1605).

> or reformists of a secular type. However, the Brotherhood has religion on its side. No government in the Middle East can move radically against a movement that identifies itself with Islam. The irony is that you then have radical movements that wants to replace the regime — of course, they may alter their language, saying they're only for democracy, etc. — and a government that's afraid to crack down on them because of their religious affiliation.
>
> So the only legitimate means of opposition is through these movements. If you join a secular movement, if you form an organization to protect the trees in your neighbourhood, you'll be shut down. Islamic organizations cannot be shut down in the same way because of their resonance, because of their identification with Muslims.[258]

Some observers perceive an increasing "Islamization" of Egyptian society, as well as an influence of Wahhabist Islam from neighbouring Saudi Arabia where many Egyptians seek temporary work and then return. One of the most visible manifestations of religious influence is the increasing numbers of women wearing headscarves. This phenomenon could be seen in one sense as preparing the ground for more radical forms of Islam. Yet, as Canada's Ambassador Michel de Salaberry's pointed out to the Committee in Cairo, "this is a very peaceful country ... which has had 7,000 years of assured harvests". His assessment was not to expect to see an Islamic revolution, something that would not be consistent with Egypt's national temperament. Moreover, the Islamists who say that "the Qur'an is the solution" really do not have a coherent program to offer.

Ambassador de Salaberry added that the Iraq war has provoked renewed opposition unrest in Egypt, as indeed it has elsewhere in the Middle East. The situation is far from being stable and contented; the prospects for political reform are murky. While Canada's decision to stay out of that war is popular with Egyptians, like other countries Canada in its relations with Egypt's state and society will have to navigate the increasingly choppy waters buffeting undemocratic regimes across the Arab region.

Witness Views in Egypt

Several prominent political commentators provided the Committee with valuable insights on the prospects for reform in the current domestic and international context facing Egyptians. Dr. Hala Mustafa, Head of the Political Department, Al Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies and Editor in Chief of the quarterly *Democracy Review*, tackled the question of why the Arab world seems to have been left behind by what has been called democracy's

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[258] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1140).

"third wave".[259] She pointed to "anti-liberal" elements that are "not open to a diversity of views" and are less receptive to a process of political liberalization based on concepts of individual rights and secular values. In Egypt there had been some movement towards modern liberal constitutionalism during the 1920 and 1930s, but that was reversed in the 1950s under Nasser's pan-Arabist statist project of modernization. In turn, the failure of this model during the 1970s produced a populist radical Islamist backlash. The result is that "anti-liberal, anti-democratic" trends are "deeply rooted in the political culture".

The key question is therefore how to break with this pattern. The dilemma for democratic reformers is that opening up the electoral process under the current circumstances would, in her view, "lead to the empowerment of the Islamists". Hence it is "not the solution for a stable, long-term democracy". The alternative is to launch a project of liberalization within the society that includes reform of the educational system and women's participation. (In regard to the latter, she observed that getting women to wear the headscarf is used by the Islamists as a visible symbol in their goal of the Islamization of society.) The problem with the government's repression of the Islamist movement is that it just crudely cracks down (on threats to its power) without challenging the wrong ideas in the Islamist ideology or being concerned about women's rights. In fact, it seems that "both sides are competing over the 'legitimate' representation of Islam". Dr. Mustafa's main concern was a collectivist anti-secular mindset manifested in a politicization of Islam that threatens individual liberties. She was doubtful of change from the bottom, looking instead to secular reformist elites as agents of liberal-democratic change.

Dr. Osama Al-Ghazali Harb, a Member of the Shura Council, Editor in Chief of the *International Politics Journal* and Secretary General of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs took a somewhat different view, arguing that it is wrong to think of the Islamic world as always in conflict with the Occident. In modern times, it was the messy dissolution of the Ottoman empire followed by unhappy experiences with colonization that have contributed to so many conflicts. More than any cultural differences, it is these political factors that are the most important causes, including of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He also expressed concern about attitudes one sometimes finds even among those who should know better in the U.S. (referring to an article by Fareed Zakaria in the October 27 issue of *Newsweek* covering the Boykin affair[260]). The "utter ignorance" of a comment linking the Islamic God to the worship of an "idol" is illustrative of the perception problem. It feeds the notion of a post-Cold War search for a "new enemy" and "Islam fits the bill" (as though Bin Laden somehow confirms the Huntington thesis of an inevitable clash).

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[259] The thesis of three historical "long waves" in the spread of democracy was postulated in the *Journal of Democracy* by Samuel Huntington, the same Harvard University political scientist identified with the "clash of civilizations" theory. According to Huntington, the first wave began in the 19th century until checked by the dictatorships that arose in Europe after the First World War. The second wave followed the Allied victory in the Second World War, and the third wave overturning dictatorships beyond the First World began in the 1970s and accelerated with the end of the Cold War. But in Huntington's view it too could be slowed or reversed, or followed by a fourth wave in this century.

Although Dr. Harb agreed that Egypt's problems have been exacerbated by the influence of Saudi Arabia's conservative brand of Islam versus more liberal and tolerant interpretations, he pointed to issues such as the non-resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as inflaming Islamist ideology and contributing to the undemocratic nature of most Muslim Arab countries. He argued that "we are paying the price" for great power strategic interests — anti-Communism, secure oil supplies, standing by Israel — which have sometimes resulted in the U.S. making deals with reactionary dictatorships and paradoxically helping to create the breeding grounds for the kinds of violence that it is now fighting. (It should be noted that Dr. Harb stated he was one of the few Egyptians to have supported military intervention in order to rid Iraq of the Saddam Hussein regime.)

In Dr. Harb's view: "Building democracies is our job ... [but] you can help in preparing the enabling environment and [resolution of] the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is key to preparing the ground for liberalization and democratization." He saw this as being both a "blind spot" for the U.S. and for the radical Islamists "the main source of their popularity in this region". Egypt presently lacks any acceptable "model" of a Muslim liberal-democratic state (that of Turkey was rejected as being inapplicable), yet Egypt has the potential to become "the cheapest model for the others" (certainly compared to the "very expensive" experiment of building democracy in Iraq). Egypt was entering a critical phase in developing its own reform process. It would have to deal with the baggage of its pre-Islamic "Pharaonic" tradition not just the debates over Islam. We must remember that: "People are not born democrats. They must learn democracy."

The thrust of these comments was that a democracy with Islamic features must still achieve certain core elements of democracy if it is to be genuine. Much of the appeal of the Islamists can be attributed to their social concern for the people (contrasting with the poor performance of governments in meeting human needs) as part of their strategy of political mobilization. A movement for the liberalization of civil society will have to address the sources of the Islamists' appeal and manage the transitional period between today's authoritarianism and tomorrow's democracy. Dr. Harb referred to "new generations of Islamic forces" that appear to be accepting democratic ideas, a positive development even if not a fully trusted one. In contrast to Dr. Mustafa, he was "not afraid of free elections", especially if the Islamists are deprived of the Israeli-Palestinian issue, on which he urged Canada to push the Americans to use their leverage. If there is not to be a political vacuum, forces for genuine democratic reform need to be encouraged within the society as a whole not only among the secular elites.

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[260] Fareed Zakaria, "And He's Head of Intelligence?", *Newsweek*, October 27, 2003, p. 41. William Boykin is the American general recently appointed as deputy undersecretary for intelligence in the U.S. Department of Defence. The controversy has revolved around the reporting of controversial comments he has made in numerous addresses to conservative Christian evangelical groups.

The Committee's informal discussion with several Egyptian parliamentarians confirmed both the aspirations for and the tensions over reforms. Dr. Hossam Badrawi, General Secretary of the governing NDP and Head of the Education Committee in the People's Assembly, spoke of a new mandate to connect the party to the civil society, and of being open to sharing ideas with the opposition groups in the Parliament. However, scepticism about such overtures was expressed by Mr. Mohammed Morsy El-Aiat, a professional engineer and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Assembly who sits as an independent but belongs to the Muslim Brotherhood and leads their group of 17 MPs in the Parliament. Democratic avenues are lacking, he observed, noting the difficulties he has as an MP to have his own political group registered. While the recent release of 3,000 political prisoners was a good, humane gesture,[156] he did not put much stock in it as a real reform step forward — it was "number 99 on a list of 100 things needed to reform our society". As for fears of an Islamist takeover if there were free elections, those were exaggerated.[157]

An important common message from the parliamentarians to the Committee was their appreciation for a distinctive Canadian approach to the Muslim world, which was described as a "major theatre" for confronting global problems by Dr. Mounir Fakhry Abdel-Nour, Head of the Opposition Wafdist Parliamentary Group in the People's Assembly. (Although one of only two elected Coptic Christians in the Parliament, he explained that he "sincerely belongs to the Muslim world culturally and socially".) Dr. Abdel-Nour saw the Canadian outlook as being healthier than that of the U.S., expressing a hope that Canadian actions would influence those of a U.S. government often blinded by economic interests. He added that Egypt has historically been open to other cultures and is the "living proof" of the fallacy of the clash of civilizations thesis since it reflects "a sequence of dialogues between different civilizations that have an obvious complementarity". Worried about the backlash against Western policies leading to dangerous extremism, he urged taking into account the reasons why Islam has become a "rallying ground of protest" against these policies.

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[156] A special report on this mass prisoner release was carried on CBC Radio's "The World at Six" on November 29, 2003. According to that report, most had been imprisoned on suspicion of association or involvement with militant Islamic groups who claim to have renounced all recourse to violence.

[157] Mr. Morsy estimated that the Muslim Brotherhood would not get more than 20% of the vote in such elections.

The Committee heard directly the preoccupations of the Egyptian government in a lengthy meeting with Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher El Sayed who began by welcoming parliamentary visits and studies as a way to "overcome stereotypes" generated by media distortions.[263] Muslim are understandably frustrated by the misconceptions and double standards, which is why "what we need is real dialogue", honest frank discussion without preconceived notions.

Much of what Minister El Sayed had to say concerned the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the vexed search for Middle East peace about which he was quite pessimistic, and not surprisingly very critical of Israeli government policies and actions, notably in the construction of the so-called "security fence". This is a subject that we will turn to in more detail in the following section of the report, where his comments will be more fully reported. Suffice to say that the present climate does not appear to be very propitious in regard to political overtures. We note that, as a result of Egypt's attempts to broker a ceasefire, Mr. Sayed was personally injured in an assault by an angry Palestinian crowd in Jerusalem after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in late December 2003.[264]

On the Iraq situation, while no one was sad to see Saddam gone, the key objective for Egypt was a reassertion of control by Iraqis. In Mr. Sayed's view, U.S. troops had shown themselves to be ignorant of local customs and had made many mistakes. There "has to be a clear timetable for a return to Iraqi control" (noting that the controversy over the proposal for sending Turkish troops had been an opportunity for Iraq's Interim Governing Council to assert itself). As for Iraq's future makeup, it was "dangerous to speak of a federation [but we need to] find a way to see a coalition of forces working together". It was not for outsiders to decide the final form of a future Iraq. The Arab League along with the OIC and the UN accept the need for Iraq to be represented as a sovereign state, but that also means ending the occupation as soon as possible.

On the prospects for democracy in the Middle East, Mr. El Sayed agreed that "the whole Arab world needs reforms". He recognized that Egypt had much more to do but argued that it must "follow a tempo that the people could accept ... [and] reform should not appear as an imposition from outside". Advances in democracy and human rights "have to be implemented from inner conviction". He was dismissive of U.S. democracy initiatives, as if one could "impose democracy for $29 million" (apparently referring to U.S. funding for democracy programs directed towards Egypt). "It is more harmful to do this than not". On the other hand, cooperative alliances for reform are welcomed, mentioning a joint project with the EU on an institute for a "dialogue of civilizations" and a library in Alexandria. What will not work is for the strong to come with their model to be followed. An example is the backlash provoked by U.S. pressure to reform Islamic education. In the Minister's view, the way to support evolutionary reform from the outside was to be discreet, subtle and patient about it; the way to end support for terrorism was to seek the real reasons behind it and avoid demonizing the other side.

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[263] He used the example of the outcry over Malaysian President Mahathir's references to Jews in his controversial address to the recent OIC Summit. All the fuss was over what amounted to 27 words in a long speech, most of which was highly critical of the failings of Muslim nations — but that self criticism of Islam was (typically) ignored by the Western press which finds its own way to exploit those failings. If anyone should have been provoked by the speech it was Muslims. He also raised the case of the U.S. general Boykin's reference to the "God of Islam as an idol", asking why that had not generated similar outrage.

[264] Toby Harnden, "Cairo Envoy Attacked by Palestinians", *National Post*, December 23, 2003, p. A10.

The Committee heard a dynamic civil-society perspective from Dr. Iman Bibars, who is both the Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa at the Ashoka Centre (an organization for development innovation) and the current chair of the Organization for the Development and Advancement of Women.[265] She explained the goals of her NGO as empowerment of women and advocacy for their rights giving the example of a new law allowing women to pass on their Egyptian nationality to their children (previously only men could do so) that was the result of a ten-year fight. Egypt's constitution includes "equal rights for women formally, but there are lots of gaps and discrimination in practice". In her view, this is less a matter of "social collectivism" than a result of the authoritarian state negating individual rights.

The real problem, she stated, is that "the idea of the public good has deteriorated". The government and women's groups are often not speaking the same language on human rights and one sees "extreme double standards" coming from the West too. For poor women in squatter communities, the first priority is economic rights and they will worry about voting later. For liberal middle class women, the focus is also on concrete gains for women, but in political terms there is also considerable confusion and disappointment with the perceived double standards in Western human rights discourse. Instead of applying some external human rights "conditionality" to relations with Egypt, she suggested that countries like Canada seek out the best among genuine innovative NGOs working with the people on the ground. The important thing is "to work in the Egyptian way" through mobilizing the people themselves and encouraging the forces for change from within. She also called for "funding in a sustained way" that is based on a "selective, intelligent understanding of the community" (citing projects supported by the Ford Foundation and the European Union as good examples).

Questioned about whether the Israeli-Palestinian conflict becomes an excuse used by Arab government to deflect attention away from domestic problems, Dr. Bibars insisted that popular anger over perceived injustices suffered by fellow Arabs is genuine and widespread, not just confined to Islamist groups. There's a lot of work to be done to repair the image of the West in the eyes of even those who believed in the ideals of Western liberal democracy. Canada is still well regarded but U.S. good intentions are not believed and there is a resistance to the prospect of an "Americanization" of the region.

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[265] The latter organization is 17 years old and works in squatter areas with some 17,000 women, many of whom are heads of households. From 2001 until recently Dr. Bibars was also the regional gender and development officer for Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and before that had worked with Catholic relief services even though she is Muslim.

As for the dangers of "Islamization", including for women's rights, she responded: "What makes the Islamists attractive is not collective values; it is self-interest". They offer social concern and social goods to women who have had no rights or voice to begin with. In short, the Islamists are giving her things of real value and "they are very organized" in terms of community development. There is a class divide here, as it is the Westernized middle and upper-class women who are concerned about losing rights. September 11 has been used to crack down on Islamic militancy,[266] but if the militants have lost ground in the society it is more due to the effects of pre-9/11 domestic terrorism that almost wiped out the tourist industry and caused a lot of economic pain.

Her assessment was that Islamic groups would probably do well electorally because they are so well organized in the society compared to others. In theory there are 17 political parties, but they lack internal democracy and connections to the grassroots whereas the Islamists have developed "trained cadres" with an affinity for the ordinary population. Islamists will win if there are free elections. (There are many Islamic groups and in her view the Muslim Brotherhood was not the most connected to the street compared to more militant groups.) The alternative to an Islamist victory is to "create civil society spaces" that allow for genuinely independent NGOs, as well as providing processes that respond to people's concerns (mentioning ombudsman processes as one possible instrument). On human rights, she saw the release of Saad Ibrahim (a former professor of hers) as unfortunately only a mixed blessing in that it came as a result of external, mainly U.S., pressure, whereas domestic human rights organizations had not done much to come to his assistance. His release was therefore not a big gain for Egyptian civil society. She also identified weaknesses in the proliferation if NGOs during the 1990s. There is another basic factor. As she put it: "If people are flourishing economically, they will not become militants".

With respect to religious and cultural perspectives, the Committee benefited from the views of Dr. Fahmy Howeidi, a prominent Islamic thinker and writer who has been associated for 45 years with the *Al-Ahram* newspaper, Dr. Abdel Moety Bayoumi, a professor of Islamic studies and dean of theology at Cairo's renowned Al-Azhar University as well as a Member of the People's Assembly, and Mr. Cherif Abdel-Meguid, Chairman of the Islamic Telephone Co.

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[266] She also observed that when 1,600 people were arrested in anti-Iraq war demonstrations in Egypt, and some tortured, that seemed to be ignored by outside human rights organizations.

that is notable for having instituted several years ago a religious advice hotline service that operates 24 hours a day.[267]

Mr. Abdel-Meguid explained that his service is expanding to Saudi Arabia and receives a number of callers from North America. He agreed that "religious discourse needs to change", but they have been fortunate in their "ability to have eminent moderate scholars on board". Dr. Bayoumi added that he and his colleagues at Al-Azhar (50 of its 70 faculties teach Islamic subjects) try to go to the sources and only advocate for justice and peace. He claimed that the senior scholars decide matters by consensus and are not under the thumb of the government. As to determining the nature of Islamic religious education, Dr. Howeidi referred to the government granting teaching licenses but Dr. Bayoumi admitted that Islam is open to interpretation by any believer and that "people do not trust the official institutions". It was observed that there are some 32,000 mosques in Egypt. But "more important than who is speaking in the mosques", suggested Abdel-Meguid, are the extreme voices heard on Arab satellite TV and disseminated on Internet Web sites. The cycle of misunderstandings and extremism was one reason why Abdel-Meguid hope that Canada could make a positive contribution to moderating intercultural influences. Specifically he proposed creating a "Canadian university in Egypt".

On the relationship of Islam to democracy and human rights, Dr. Bayoumi denied that there was anything incompatible with these ideals in the Qur'an; on the contrary, Islamic civilization promotes tolerance and the rights of others. "So the Qur'an is never a barrier to achieve democracy but it urges its followers to adopt it." Dr. Howeidi added that the Islamic way of life includes the general principles of "shura" as the obligation to consult, with the details determined by the circumstances of implementation. He had written a book on the subject of democracy and Islam 12 years ago and "could not find any contradiction". In Dr. Bayoumi's view, Islam is able to adapt to different social and political contexts while promoting respect for human values and welfare — in that regard, it could improve upon the weaknesses of Western democracy. On issues like women's equality and wearing the veil, Dr. Howeidi observed that "we have the right to differ" from other Muslim societies but there is no problem with women choosing to wear it. Dr. Bayoumi added that the Qur'an grants rights equally to men and women and that dress is a matter of choice. In Egypt there is no discrimination on this account.

A contentious point emerged, however, when questions were posed about whether there could be any Islamic justification for "suicide bombings". Dr. Howeidi seemed to justify them as a form of Palestinian resistance to being expelled from their homeland. Dr. Bayoumi contended that Islamic scholars agree that such so-called "suicide" attacks are not terrorism but "martyrdom" when people sacrifice their lives to resist occupation. There was an implication that these could be justified as a last resort "means of self-defence" against an Israeli "militarized society" supplied with weapons by the West, and that the blame for Palestinian violence should be put on Israeli aggression and intransigence. (Mr. Abdel-Meguid drew the parallel: if the IRA sets off a bomb in London, do we bomb Belfast in retaliation?) In Dr. Bayoumi's view, it will be hard to improve relations between the West and the Islamic world without a just Middle East peace. And in that regard, he asked who has the most capability to stop the spiral of violence — the stronger or the weaker party to a conflict that has engendered so much hatred and resentment.

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[267] The pay-per-call service — averaging 600 a day — has been dubbed "Dial-a-Fatwa" or "Islam on a platter". Responses to questions are provided by Al-Azhar scholars, among them Dr. Bayoumi.

This difficult exchange with Committee members spurred Dr. Howeidi to remark that people are sometimes "talking different languages". He put it rather provocatively that we "know nothing about Canada" but assume U.S. influence. Egyptians who are literate and read the press may know something about Canada's independent stands but the common people don't and a visible presence of Canadian culture is lacking.

The subject of how to increase such a presence subsequently came up in a wide-ranging roundtable discussion with members of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs. Its Vice-President, Ambassador Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Shaker began by observing that "Canada's separate position from the U.S. on Iraq is greatly appreciated, especially in the intellectual community", and has been noticed by Arab opinion. In the wake of 9/11, "the Islamic world needs a lot of reform, true, but we're not waiting for inspiration from President Bush". It is important to go to the core of things: "We need badly to disentangle politics from religion" and to deal with Western misconceptions of Islam. Because reform is upsetting to some conservative circles, that will take some courage to tackle. That is an Arab task.

Participants agreed on a need for better education on both sides. The West needs to improve its portrayal of Islam; and Egypt, traditionally a centre of Islamic learning, also needs to do a better job of communicating an authentic picture of Islam to the outside world. The diversity of Islamic societies can present a challenge in that regard, as sometimes "the local social habits are put on the back of Islam" (e.g., the restriction against women driving cars in Saudi Arabia, which has nothing to do with religion actually). It was suggested that Canada and Egypt could cooperate through a "joint project" of social communication (using the three languages, English, French and Arabic). One member was concerned by a "lack of communication between your world and ours", observing that in Egypt the "ordinary person on the street" does not have a sense of Canada or appreciation of its independence vis-à-vis the U.S. Council members advocated encouraging more contacts at all levels, notably with the media. These exchanges brought out a sense of Egyptians' frustration with some Western attitudes but their perception that they can have an open and constructive dialogue with Canadians.

The sole female member present, Dr. Mona Makram Ebeid also addressed educational issues (she had served five years on the Education Committee of the Parliament), stating that the curriculum is "totally obsolete" and that "education is our biggest problem", linked to the unemployment problem of the young. She suggested that the "Islamist movement here is a refuge for the frustrated young", born of "movements of despair and frustration", not real religious commitment, and that: "What we need from Canada is this: open up universities and training centres." She also referred to the creation in recent years of a national council for human rights and a national council for women as well as other advances by women. There is hope in a "resurgent civil society" beyond government control or suppression. Mention was also made of an "association for the advancement of education" and programs such as summer camps for poor children. It was suggested that expatriate Egyptians living in Canada might also be enlisted as part of a bridge-building effort involving more educational and cultural exchanges, because it is ignorance that begets intolerance.

Directions for Canadian Policy

The Committee came away from its encounters in Cairo, one of the great capitals of the Arab world, with the sense of important opportunities to be seized. A comment that "Canada is the flavour of the year" was reinforced by the warmth of our reception at an event hosted by Mr. Motaz Raslan, Chairman of the recently formed Canada-Egypt Business Council. We note as well that 2004 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations.

In our first meeting, Dr. Harb cited the role played by former Canadian prime minister Lester Pearson during the Suez crisis that put Canada on the diplomatic map in the Middle East, stating: "You have played a very major role and I hope you can continue to do so." Muslim Brotherhood MP Mohammed Morsy El-Aiat observed that "Canada is more acceptable to people in the Middle East than other Western countries". He hoped Canada would play a "major role" and would focus on civil society development. And in a last informal discussion, Professor Baghat Korany of the American University in Cairo made the point that Canada was well served to distinguish itself from the worldview of the present U.S. administration, given that the region's problems could not be solved by military means.

Those final discussions also touched on the ingredients for the Canadian private sector to work successfully in the Arab region, benefiting from the long experience of Mr. Raslan and also native Calgarian Darren Law, Manager of the Conrad Hilton hotel. In terms of enhancing an official Canadian presence in Egypt, Jean-Philippe Tachdjian, Second Secretary at the embassy responsible for Political, Cultural and Public Affairs, outlined compelling proposals for increased projection of Canadian culture and values in the Arab world through more resources for public diplomacy, cultural promotion, and specifically the building of a new Canadian cultural centre in Cairo.[268] The Committee was also provided information on the very promising plans currently under consideration to establish the "Al-Ahram Canadian University" in Cairo.

Another important avenue is the development cooperation channel, especially given that Egypt has long been a significant recipient of Canadian aid (CIDA's 7th largest bilateral program in Africa[269]). Dr. Bibars was among those who emphasized the value of projects working directly with people through genuinely independent NGOs. In earlier testimony in Ottawa, former Canadian ambassador Michael Bell spoke eloquently about small-scale projects such as a women's initiative fund to help them start their own businesses and a girls' education project. As he put it, "if Canadian assistance doesn't touch people's lives in the near term, it's probably not worth doing. ... When you change the way people think and give them space, that creates initiative and allows them to fulfill themselves."[270] Sometimes that means creatively getting around official roadblocks and constraints, he added.

Finally, in Cairo, Mrs. Donna Kennedy-Glans, Director of Corporate Responsibility for Calgary-based Menas Associates (and a former Vice-President of Nexen Corporation with long experience in the region), made one of the last points about not neglecting a conscientious role that Canadian business could play. She urged an effort to "engender support for corporate social responsibility in the Arab/Muslim world in a real way, not just rhetoric". That means exploring "avenues for engagement" working hand in hand with host private sectors — a process she referred to as "wonderful infiltration". While acknowledging that "companies have not been very good at community investment", she argued strongly for more connections between the private and the non-profit sectors.

In sum, the Committee underlines that Canadian policymakers have a rich body of experience and menu of ideas from which to draw in order to increase Canada's relationship with Egypt. At this critical juncture in Egypt's and the region's future, it is surely time to do so.

RECOMMENDATION 12

In engaging the Government of Egypt in political dialogue, Canada should consistently encourage Egypt to institute democratic reforms and to respect basic standards of internationally

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[268] A detailed "Strategy Paper: The Projection of Culture and Values in the Arab World" prepared by Mr. Tachdjian was submitted to the Committee's attention in November 2003.

[269] CIDA's current focus in Egypt is on human resource development. Total Canadian aid to Egypt (through multilateral as well as bilateral channels) was approximately $25 million in 2000-2001. Cumulative bilateral Canadian aid spending in Egypt from 1976 to 2001 amounts to $325 million.

[270] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1140).

recognized human rights, including in the necessary common efforts to curb political violence and religious extremism. Such efforts should also address underlying conditions of poverty and social exclusion.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Government of Canada should use the 50th anniversary in 2004 of the establishment of bilateral relations with Egypt to significantly upgrade Canada's capacity to carry out educational and cultural cooperation activities and exchanges within Egypt and benefiting the wider Arab region. In particular, the Canadian government in cooperation with the provinces should strongly support the Al-Ahram Canadian University project and should consider the feasibility of establishing a Canadian Cultural Centre in Cairo.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Government should ensure that Canadian development assistance to Egypt is concentrated in people-centred projects, working with independent NGOs wherever possible. Canada should also work with the private sector to advance responsible investment and trade that benefits both countries.

The Middle East Peace Process, Israel and Palestine

The long-running conflict between Israel and the Arab world — which dates from the post-Second World War division of the former British mandate of Palestine and creation of the Jewish state in 1948 — remains the world's most controversial, and seemingly intractable, international as well as civil conflict. It has led to wars, generations of refugees, dispossession and deprivation, military occupations, the horrors of suicide terrorism, the spread of extremism and hatred; in sum, an enormous and ongoing toll of human suffering and loss.

It is *not* the Committee's intention to examine this conflict in any detail, much less to assign blame to any party. However it is impossible to consider the prospects for peaceful and democratic changes in the Arab and wider Muslim world without touching upon it. This is not just a commonly expressed view among our witnesses. For example, the UK Government Strategy Paper we cited in Part I, referring to relations between Western democracies and Islamic countries and groups and the causes of tension in this relationship, states that "the Israel/Palestine problem, if not resolved, will continue to provide their most obvious focus".[271]

Brief Background

Although, as mentioned, Egypt made a separate peace with Israel in 1979,[272] it was not until the 1990s that peace negotiations were undertaken involving the Palestinians — who now number approximately 3.5 million people, predominantly Sunni Muslim, concentrated in the territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (although Palestinian Arabs also constitute a growing minority within Israel[273]). September 2003 marked the first decade anniversary of the Oslo peace accords that were the first major breakthrough coming after the violence of the first Palestinian uprising or intifada. Some view Oslo as an "orphaned peace" that was never accepted by many in the Arab world.[274] However, its fruitful years did, as former Canadian ambassador Michael Bell has written, allow Israelis and Palestinians "to savour the taste of what living together could mean and they will not forget it, not even during these lean years".[275] The U.S.-sponsored Oslo agreement resulted in the granting of semi-autonomy to the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza under a Palestinian Authority even if these areas remain under Israeli military control. They would form the core of the future Palestinian state that current peace initiatives envisage coming into being pending a "final status" comprehensive settlement that would resolve outstanding issues such as the status of Jerusalem, the rights of Palestinian refugees, and the fate of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

Since Oslo, various peace initiatives and plans have been proposed both by governments and non-governmental groups aimed at achieving that elusive final Israeli-Palestinian/Arab agreement. This already difficult task has been complicated in recent years by the effects of a second Palestinian intifada that began in 2000, the weaknesses of the Palestinian Authority, a continued expansion of Jewish settlements, and Israel's attempts to crack down on terrorist attacks by Islamist militants and to protect itself against such attacks.[276]

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[271] *UK International Priorities*, December 2003, p. 15.

[272] Jordan is the other Arab state to have done so, but not until 1994.

[273] Nearly 20% of Israel's population of over 6 million is Arab and, as Jewish immigration slows, demographic factors suggests this proportion will continue to rise. On the situation of Israel's Arab citizens see *Identity Crisis: Israel and Its Arab Citizens*, International Crisis Group Middle East Report No. 25, Amman/Brussels, March 4, 2004.

[274] See for example, Ajami, Chapter five "The Orphaned Peace".

[275] Michael Bell, "Oslo: Ten Years On, Remember Peace?", *The Globe and Mail*, September 13, 2003, p. A17.

Most of the peace proposals call for some version of "land for peace" that would result in a two-state solution in which Israel and Palestine would be able to co-exist side by side within secure and recognized borders. From the Arab side, a major official initiative was proposed by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah and endorsed by the Arab League Summit in Beirut in March 2002. Among other things, it promised full recognition and normalization of relations with Israel provided that it withdrew from all territories occupied since the 1967 war and that an independent Palestinian state was established on those territories. The key international plan that has been in play in the past year is the "Roadmap for Peace" presented by the so-called "Quartet" (of the United States in cooperation with the European Union, the Russian Federation, and the United Nations) to Israel and the Palestinian Authority on April 30, 2003. It envisages a three-phase plan leading to a Palestinian state and permanent peace agreement.

Progress on the roadmap to date has been slow to materialize and has faced numerous setbacks. Dr. Henry Siegman of the Council on Foreign Relations told the Committee in New York in May 2003 that he was pessimistic about Israeli, Palestinian, Arab and U.S. willingness to really make the moves required to drive the roadmap forward.[277] Since then, however, several non-governmental initiatives involving prominent Israelis and Palestinians have moved ahead. The most promising, albeit always contentious and contested, of these has been the "Geneva Initiative" led by a former Israelis justice minister Yossi Beilin and former Palestinian culture minister Yasser Abed Rabbo. It produced an accord the text of which was widely circulated in Israel and the Palestinian territories and launched internationally with considerable fanfare in

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[276] Particularly controversial in that regard is the separation or security "fence" — an over 700-kilometer long barrier that partially follows the internationally recognized pre-1967 war boundary ("green line") between the West Bank and Israel but also encloses parts of Arab territory; the construction of which was about one-quarter completed in early 2004. Israel describes its purpose as "terror prevention", to stop suicide bombers from entering Israeli territory. However, Palestinians have strongly protested its legality, location, and socio-economic effects, seeking to obtain a ruling against it from the UN's International Court of Justice. Canada has supported UN resolutions critical of the barrier, but abstained in an early December 2003 General Assembly vote that approved the court proceeding. Canada and other Western countries have also submitted arguments to the Court in early 2004 arguing against the case being heard as an international legal question on the grounds that it is a matter for political negotiations. The barrier was being contested in a case before Israel's supreme court; however Israel announced it would not attend hearings before the World Court beginning February 23, 2004. (For a review of the controversy see Paul Adams, "Israel's line in the sand", *The Globe and Mail*, February 14, 2004, p. F4.)

[277] Peter David, foreign editor of *The Economist*, has similarly low expectations and suggests that: "The impasse between Israel and the Palestinians will grow even more violent if the superpower does not become more deeply engaged in efforts to revive diplomacy. This will be hard in an election year, but much is at stake." ("Slowly does it in the Middle East", *The Economist: The World in 2004*, p. 18.)

Geneva on December 1, 2003.[278] The joint Israeli-Palestinian nature of the initiative was also welcomed by some Western countries, including Canada. The Geneva Accord outlined an ambitious blueprint for potential terms of settlement on all of the main outstanding issues still to be negotiated politically by the governments concerned. To date, however, no government has endorsed this plan. Although the Geneva proposals may not be the solution, and are no substitute for the stalled U.S.- and UN-backed roadmap, they at least have given some hope that Israelis and Palestinians are able to cooperate in producing ideas for peace as a way out of the current impasse.[279]

Yet some worry that time may be running out for a negotiated two-state solution as envisaged since Oslo. There have always been those who objected to the idea of Israel as a Jewish state and whose preferred scenario would be a single secular state giving equal rights to Israeli and Palestinian citizens. A much more likely prospect, however, is that lack of progress with the roadmap,[280] the continued construction of the West Bank "security fence", combined with Israelis' fatigue over the ongoing violence — a fatigue and frustration that is at least as great on the Palestinian side[281] — could lead Israel to seek its own unilateral solution that might involve withdrawing from some occupied territories and retrenching within what it determines are militarily defensible borders. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's controversial proposals made in early February 2004 to dismantle Jewish settlements in Gaza and some in the West Bank lend credence to that possibility.[282]

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[278] The Geneva Accord was accompanied by a statement of support from 58 former senior political leaders around the world. Public opinion surveys also indicated majority support for some of its proposals among Israelis and Palestinians. ("A silent, moderate majority", *The Economist*, November 29, 2003, p. 43.) The text of that statement, poll details, and a series of related reports can be accessed on the International Crisis Group Web site at: http://www.crisisweb.org. On the Geneva launch see also Paul Adams, "Peace plans proliferate", *The Globe and Mail*, December 2, 2003; "Striking Accord", *The Economist*, December 3, 2003; and for a broader assessment see David Berlin, "Where Leaders Fail", *The Walrus*, February/March 2004, p. 66-75.

[279] On the growing desperation and desire among ordinary Palestinians and Israelis for a way out from the violence, see "Special report, Israelis and Palestinians: Voices from the front line," *The Economist*, February 21, 2004, p. 24-26.

[280] For an analysis of the roadmap's faltering momentum and U.S. commitment to it see Connie Black, "Back Roads", *The New Yorker*, December 15, 2003, p. 86-97.

[281] As a report in *The Economist* puts it:

> ... the very bleakness of today's outlook for Arab-Isreali peace may be forcing the players to reassess their priorities. Inside the occupied territories, life has grown increasingly desperate. Food consumption has fallen by one-third since the start of the Palestinian intifada, the Palestinian revolt in late 2000. Nearly a quarter of the Palestinians have no job. That may be partly why even the radical Islamist groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, have recently begun to say that they will accept a long truce with Israel, and may be willing to join a unity government with the secular parties that have so far monopolized office in the Palestinian Authority. ("At least they're thinking about talking", January 31, 2004, p. 43.)

[282] On early reaction to the Sharon government's proposals see James Bennet, "Shift on Settlements: Sharon's 'Painful' Course", *The New York Times*, February 4, 2004; "Sharon's surprise" and "Sharon's Gaza gambit", *The Economist*, February 7, 2004, p.12-13 and 42. On the wider debate over one state or two, see Gary Sussman, "Is the Two-State Solution Dead?", *Current History*, January 2004, p. 37-42.

The Committee does not have a crystal ball into the future of this tragic conflict. However, we consider that every reasonable effort to advance the state of political negotiations and to reduce the toll of misery and death inflicted on the peoples of the region is one that is worth the energetic support of Canada's diplomacy towards the region.

Witness Views in Ottawa Hearings

Many witnesses told the Committee that a resolution of the conflict is seen by Muslims as a top international relations priority. As Salim Mansur put it in an early hearing, "Palestine is the mother of all issues in the Arab-Muslim world, and once this issue is settled to the satisfaction of the Palestinians — and they have been forthcoming, but they cannot achieve the end of Israeli occupation of the land by themselves — the situation between the United States and the Arab-Muslim world will change rapidly for the better."[283] Saleem Qureshi emphasized that "Palestine remains the most sensitive issue, and public opinion, not only in the Arab world, but far beyond in the Muslim world, generally remains highly hostile to the U.S. because of its total support for Israel. It will perhaps not be an exaggeration to say that so long as the Palestinian-Israel conflict festers, America will not have friendly public opinion anywhere in the Muslim world."[284]

Of course, as has already been observed, the conflict can also be used by Muslim governments as a means to deflect criticism of their own performance. The point is that it provides just such an excuse. As Farhang Rajaee stated: "Even if they are not very serious in their heart of hearts about Palestine — they may not lose sleep over the Palestinian cause — as long as it is there, it provides 'the cause' … ". David Dewitt added that "the issue of Israel and the Palestinians is a mobilizing force. It's something they are required to do for local politics, and it provides them a place within the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Therefore, it allows them at a great distance to take what is considered a principled stand within the Islamic community for their integrity, credibility, and political position, at no cost. As soon as the Israeli-Palestinian situation is resolved within Israel and Palestine, they'll move on. … Right now it's convenient and something they can use."[285]

Witnesses suggested a range of possibilities in order to move matters forward, with some urging more Canadian involvement. Mazen Chouaib argued that "Canada has a role to play, not only as chair of the refugee committee, but also as a participant in actual negotiations and discussions that will take place according to the roadmap … Canada has leverage in the Arab world, it doesn't have any colonial or political baggage, and it's respected because of what it offers."[286] John Sigler stressed that the idea of an "international monitoring force" should be high on our agenda given Canada's experience in peace operations including in the Middle East region — "I'd give a much higher priority to being involved in the Palestinian-Israel peace process now than I would to Afghanistan."[287]

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[283] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (0920).

[284] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (0955).

[285] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1230).

Others pointed to the need to create spaces for political dialogue both in Canada and abroad. Michael Bell referred to the importance of CIDA's work in the West Bank and Gaza and suggested: "What we can do is to focus on affecting the mindsets of people, the way they think, expanding pluralism, and building institutions."[288] As Karim Karim stated: "We need to create safe spaces among the Palestinians, Israelis, Jews, their diasporas, the Arab diasporas, to come together and to understand them. What is happening right now is that they're slipping very clearly into racist notions of each other, which really needs to be stopped."[289] According to Sheema Khan: "We need to create more, if you like, 'dialogue groups'. ... we must somehow try to bring people together, create safe spaces where you're not condemned for being 'anti-Semitic' or you're not condemned for being Islamophobic. If we can get rid of all these labels and just sit down, I think, first to hear each other's pain ... because if people realize that the loss of a child, whether Palestinian or Israeli, is deeply hurtful on both sides, if we start to see some commonality, I think that would be a great start."[290]

None of this is to underestimate in any way all of the factors that need to be dealt with and the obstacles, attitudinal as well as political and structural, that need to be dealt with in forging a sustainable Middle East peace. Michael Bell observed that it may never be possible to eliminate terrorism but that "if the Palestinian people could lead more normal lives, there might be a falling off in support for the solutions of Hamas and Jihad." He added: "The important thing, though, is that the Palestinian Authority and its leaders, whoever they might be, have credibility, support and the loyalty of their populations."[291] Noah Feldman made another key point about preconditions for negotiations: "I'll tell you bluntly that any negotiation that's hostage to extremist violence is not going to be a successful negotiation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If you're going to walk away from negotiations when there's violence, the negotiations are going to stop, because you're giving the opportunity to extremists to veto the process."[292]

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[286] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1655).

[287] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 34 (1135).

[288] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1240).

[289] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1255).

[290] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53 (1235).

[291] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1245).

[292] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1205).

Secretary General Amre Moussa of the Arab League, who also raised the added complication of Israel's nuclear weapons monopoly in any goal to rid the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, claimed that it is not peace proposals that are lacking, but political will and political balance.

> There has to be a balanced approach, there has to be a fair settlement, and the ingredients of the settlement are there. We're not going to invent the wheel every couple of months or every year or every administration or every government in the Middle East. ... We in the Arab world are ready to make peace, normalize relations, recognize the state of Israel, and turn the page, put the Arab-Israeli conflict behind us, provided that Israel has the same will and is ready to withdraw, ready to recognize a Palestinian state, ready to deal with any problems we have. Each and every problem has a solution if there is a balance of power between both.[293]

The Committee also heard testimony from Mr. Peter Hansen, Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He described in detail deteriorating conditions in the occupied territories, with about 60% of the population below the poverty line, unemployment rates of 35-50%, and 1.2 million people dependent on food aid, not to mention the grim statistics of violent deaths and destruction of property. As he stated: "We have not only gone backwards and wiped out all the progress that was made after the Oslo agreement, we have been set back almost ten years in terms of losses, yet that [the Palestinian] economy has to support a much larger population."[294]

At the same time, concerns also surfaced about the adequacy of contributions to UNRWA from Arab countries, about allegations of misuse of funds, about perceptions of anti-Israeli bias in the agency, and most seriously, about accusations that UNRWA-supported schools and facilities may have been used, including by militant Islamist organizations operating in the refugee camps, as breeding grounds for Palestinian terrorism. International aid to the Palestinian Authority is reported to have fallen sharply in 2003 from previous years' levels.[295] There are also ongoing controversies over whether Palestinian textbooks incite violence.[296] Mr. Hansen denied many of the allegations, arguing that the textbooks issue is not a one-sided black and white question and that considerable progress has been made. Although he acknowledged critical studies such as the one by the Centre for Monitoring the Impact of Peace

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[293] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 48 (1625).

[294] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 56 (1600).

[295] Wafa Amr, "International aid to Palestinians drops by half", *National* Post, February 17, 2004, p. A10. For a useful review of international aid to the Palestinian territories and criticisms of the role of UNRWA see Harvey Morris and Sharmila Devi, "Empty coffers: Palestinians plead for more international aid despite donor fatigue and fears over misuse of funds", *Financial Times*, November 25, 2003, p. 19.

[296] See, for example, Itmar Marcus and Barbara Crook, "Palestinian children have learned from their elders", *National Post*, January 10, 2004, p. A15. Mr. Marcus is founder and director of Palestinian Media Watch.

(CMIP), he also pointed to a more positive U.S.-financed study by the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information.[297] Furthermore, referring to criticisms made by Israel Defence Force Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon over the ineffectiveness of harsh tactics used in the territories in achieving security for Israelis[298], Mr. Hansen argued that "excessive use of force" is "probably creating more terrorist bombers ... than anyone could by stuffing any amount of textbooks down the throats of any number of schoolchildren".[299]

The Committee cannot resolve such controversies in this report. We can only decry the continuing insecurity — not only physical security but also social and economic security — experienced by ordinary citizens, Israelis and Palestinians, caught up in the violence generated by the conflict. Responsible authorities at all levels must at a minimum do everything in their power to reduce those levels of violence.

Witness Views in the Middle East

As already noted, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was one of the grievances in the relationship of the West and the Muslim world raised most frequently by Arab and Muslim interlocutors. There was often criticism of Western, in particular U.S., support for Israeli government policies. At the same time, this was often coupled with a more positive perception and appreciation of a Canadian approach that was considered to be more moderate and even-handed. A number of witnesses therefore hoped for a stronger Canadian role in addressing the region's most longstanding and dangerous problem.

For example, Saudi Arabia's veteran and respected foreign minister, Prince Saud Al-Faisal, noted that "Canada has played an important role in the Middle East with the United Nations ... and has an impeccable image in the region." He explained that he understood Israel's need for security. However, he argued that this cannot be achieved on the basis of unilateral "geographic demands" — what he bluntly referred to as "grabbing more Arab land" — and Israel's nuclear monopoly. Moreover, there must be security for Arabs too, and Israelis must learn to live with Palestinians. In Prince Saud's view, the ingredients for a solution are not that complicated, and should involve a ceasefire supervised by an agreed third party. Unfortunately, with Israel's military strikes such as the one inside Syria and the U.S. continuing its support for the Sharon government, he worried that the "roadmap" was going nowhere.

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[297] Subsequent to Mr. Hansen's testimony, UNRWA officials also submitted additional information to the Committee's attention, including Congressional testimony on October 30, 2003 by Ziad Asali MD, President of the American Task Force on Palestine to the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labour, Health and Human Services Hearing on "Palestinian Education — Teaching Peace or War?".

[298] On the nature of internal Israeli disagreements over military policy in the Palestinian territories, see Alon Ben-David, "Dangerous Divide", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, November 12, 2003, p. 23.

[299] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 56 (1645). A recent report concurs that a policy of "harsh military and punitive economic measures" has significantly strengthened the hand of Islamist extremists in the occupied territories. See, *Dealing with Hamas*, Middle East Report No. 21, International Crisis Group, Amman/Brussels, January 26, 2004.

Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Maher El Sayed, also a veteran diplomat, told the Committee that Egypt supported efforts to achieve a mutual peace plan, but at the same time, "no agreement is possible without the consent of Arafat." He thanked Canada for its support of a UN resolution in the fall of 2003 that condemned Israel's construction of a "security fence" in the West Bank. In his view, security will not be achieved through walls and more checkpoints, and by Israel taking advantage of those to grab more Arab land, but through learning to live together. The wall is counter-productive since it will not stop suicide bombers but will make a viable two-state solution harder to achieve. Meanwhile, Israel must be held accountable for its clampdown on the occupied territories, for the deaths of innocent Palestinians, and for its policy of targeted assassinations.

Asked if the roadmap had any chance to succeed, Mr. Sayed's response was only if there is "parallel movement" by both sides through a balanced negotiation. Unfortunately, in his view, while those who are trying to sabotage the roadmap are in the opposition on the Palestinian side, in Israel they are the government. So the process "is in bad shape but not dead". It is the only official process on the table but the problem is "how to convince people that peace is doable". It needs U.S. pressure, but the U.S. has not been even-handed, and moving into a pre-election period there is no comparable Arab lobby (to the pro-Israeli lobby). The most objective people are in the U.S. State Department but it has been weakened. Moreover, the roadmap initiative was partly to appease Arab anger over the Iraq invasion. There is fatigue with the ongoing violence, but he was pessimistic about any momentum for peace. Iraq has become a quagmire and the roadmap is not proceeding.

These sentiments were reinforced by remarks made in a roundtable with the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs. A former ambassador to Norway referred to the "humanitarian catastrophe" that is afflicting the Palestinian people daily and urged the application of a multilateral vision, including the intervention of an "international force" (harking back to what Lester Pearson proposed at the United Nations 50 years ago) and hoping that Canada would exert pressure on the U.S. to press Israel to accept such a force.

It is worth noting as well that these views coming from established foreign policy elites would typically be distinctly more moderate and accommodating than many opinions one would encounter within Arab and Muslim civil societies. An indication of that came in discussions with Mr. Morsy El-Aiat, head of the Muslim Brotherhood group within Egypt's People's Assembly. He claimed that the Muslim Brotherhood accepts the de facto reality of Israel as a state and is not against the Jews as long as Palestine has its own state. However, when pressed, it was apparent that he regarded Israel as an aggressor state lacking a fully legitimate foundation. He therefore held to a preference for an ultimately single-state solution rather than conceding a two-state solution based on mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition.

The contrast in perspectives was sharp for Committee members who had come from meetings in Israel several days earlier. Israel's security preoccupations were a dominant theme in those discussions held with foreign ministry officials, members of the Knesset, academics and journalists, although the Committee also heard about the concerns of Israel's Arab minority and visited the occupied territories.

Members of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Centre for Political Research told the Committee that the entire region is facing a transition crisis with the current leadership in many countries likely to be replaced in the next five to ten years. This transition period holds considerable potential for domestic and regional instability. They highlighted a number of Israel's security concerns in that regard. For example, they saw little prospect for change in an Iranian regime that in their view continues to pose a threat, as much from the "reformist" as the "conservative" side, in its quest to acquire weapons of mass destruction (perhaps like North Korea as deterrence against U.S. intervention). They also drew a clear connection between Tehran, Damascus, Hizballah and Palestinian rejectionists of peace with Israel, characterizing this threat as the "Northern System." They believe Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is giving Hizballah a green light to carry out its periodic attacks against Israel — in effect, Syria is conducting a proxy war through Hizballah as well as through Islamic Jihad and Hamas which also benefit from Syrian support. Iran's involvement in this system is manifested in particular through the presence of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps troops stationed in the Beka'a Valley. In the Centre's assessment, this "system" has allowed Syria and Hizballah to thus far remain immune from the international campaign against terrorism. Clear, firm messages from the international community to Damascus are required in their view.

As to the situation in the Palestinian territories, the Centre's director, Harry Kney Tal, stated that Yasser Arafat remains the source of authority in the territories. However, the lack of a clear line of succession once Arafat is no longer on the scene increases the risk of the territories becoming a full-fledged "failed state." Even with Arafat in control, Mr. Kney Tal suggested that local Fatah cells are acting increasingly independently, in some cases with the support of Iran. This is only serving to further weaken central control.

An informal discussion with several members of the Knesset Foreign and Defence Committee raised several other regional security concerns. For example, Committee Chair Yuval Shteinitz of the Likud Party, focused much of his attention on Egypt. He cited numerous examples of Egyptian action, or inaction, designed to undermine both the peace process and Israel's development of normal relations with other countries in the region, including Morocco and Qatar. On a more positive note, Eti Livni of the centrist Shinui Party spoke about the process behind the high-level, if unofficial, joint Israeli-Palestinian "Geneva initiative" referred to earlier.

Mr. Dore Gold, Director of the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs and a former Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations (as well as advisor to Prime Minister Sharon) downplayed the importance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a source of "Muslim rage", arguing that fatwas against the U.S. and Israel were being issued by Islamist radicals even in the Oslo period when Israel was withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza. In light of his recent book, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*,[300] he not surprisingly pointed the finger at Saudi Arabia's alleged role in supporting radical jihadist groups from Osama bin Laden and other anti-Soviet "mujahedin" in Afghanistan to contemporary Palestinian rejectionist groups. Mr. Gold also pointed to the prominence of Saudi-issued fatwas justifying suicide bombing on Hamas Web sites as an example of negative Saudi influence.

A rather different, though equally sobering, perspective emerged from a roundtable with NGOs and academics that considered the Israeli public's mood, the prospects for a rejuvenated peace process, and the condition of Israel's Arab minority. The Committee heard a relatively pessimistic assessment of the chances for a breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With U.S. attention focused elsewhere and little willingness in the international community to aggressively intervene without Washington's backing, Avraham Sela, Chair of Hebrew University's International Relations Department, held out little hope for a negotiated solution anytime soon. At the same time, Israeli Arab human rights expert Mohammed Zeidan, underlined the negative impact of the conflict on relations between Israel's Arab and Jewish communities. He argued that Israel must take into account the needs of its growing Arab minority as a long-term issue.

Such considerations were reinforced in discussions in Ramallah in the West Bank where Committee members met with several former Palestinian ministers, legislators, officials, and journalists. They stressed that the causes of the conflict and its persistence are primarily political, *not* religious. However, the militant Islamist groups, who never embraced the Oslo accords, have developed a social base among people suffering deprivation. As well, there was pessimism that the conflict could be solved with the Sharon government in power. As for Chairman Arafat, in their assessment he is not able to stop the suicide bombers and the Palestinian security forces remain too weak. The important thing is to try to coordinate solutions that can contain and lessen the violence inflicted on both sides. The Committee was told that efforts must continue to achieve a ceasefire and a final binding agreement.

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[300] Cited in the report's previous section on Saudi Arabia.

Although the next section of the report deals specifically with Jordan, given that country's especially close association with the Palestinian problem, some Jordanian views should also be noted here. Jordanian parliamentarians spoke out against what they considered to be causes of the current troubles, going back to the borders established by the Western powers after the First World War (e.g., the Sykes Picot agreement[301]). A focus of their frustration was what they saw as the double standard between the treatment of Israel and the Palestinians. It was unreasonable to suggest that anyone who fights for his own land is a terrorist. Without a just peace, suicide bombers will continue to feel they have no other choice. The Committee heard objections to claims of a Jewish right to Palestine as well as complaints about U.S. and Zionist bias in the media and in international organizations.

In a roundtable with Jordanian civil-society representatives, questions surfaced about the future of the two-state solution. A common view was that if such a solution is "off the table", violent conflict will ensue. Moreover, to be politically workable the solution would need to be pursued along the 1967 (i.e., pre-war) boundaries. It was also noted that requiring the recognition of the "legitimacy of Israel" (as opposed to recognizing Israel's existence) is understood by many Palestinians to mean accepting their expulsion as being morally justified. In another panel with Jordanian journalists, concerns were expressed about what they saw as a systematic movement towards ending the existence of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. History, they maintained, is at an extremely dangerous juncture. If the situation erupts, it could destroy hopes for peace for years. Current negotiations, including those of the non-governmental Geneva initiative, have been carried out in secret. Meanwhile public opinion has no trust in either the good faith of the current Israeli government or the U.S. as an "honest broker". The impression they conveyed is that the "other side has all the cards" while Arabs and Palestinians are "under the hammer."

Last but not least, Committee members heard detailed comments from former Jordanian prime minister Taher Masri and former deputy prime minister and foreign minister Abdullah Ensour, both considered moderates but who, while optimistic about the desire for peace on the Arab side, were acutely aware of the depth of bitterness as well as less hopeful about the current orientation of Israel's government and people. Mr. Masri observed that the Palestinians' situation had been deteriorating for six decades. If one adds Iraq to a legacy of humiliation and broken promises by the West, the reasons for anti-U.S. feeling in the region are clear and understandable. People in the street are angry with their leadership too. In his view, moderate Islamists are ready for a peace deal with Israel, which means taking its perspective into consideration. But Israeli actions, such as demolition of houses, are seen as punitive rather than self-defence, creating more stumbling blocks.

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[301] Sykes-Picot was a secret deal reached between Great Britain and France in 1916 to divide up the Middle East possessions of a defeated Ottoman empire. It formed the basis for negotiated terms after the war that, for example, placed Syria under a French mandate and Jordan under a British mandate. For details see Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, p. 382 ff.

Mr. Ensour agreed with these generally shared frustrations among Arabs and their perception that they do not receive fair treatment within the international system. He alluded to the UN Security Council and the numbers of U.S. vetoes cast to protect Israel's interests. A country like Jordan might receive better treatment from a country like Canada. But overall Jordan does not have much of a voice given the systematic bias that favours the other side. Mr. Masri and Mr. Ensour maintained that while there has been some progress towards peace among the region's states (some, including Jordan, now have peace treaties or relations of some kind with Israel), and while most of the Arab public wants peace, a key question is how serious are the Israelis. Jordanians will recognize Israel's existence and accept two states along the 1967 borders as a workable solution. But they will not accept Israeli occupation of the Palestinian people and their land.

Mr. Ensour added that there remain political parties in Israel that speak of a greater Israel from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, not just to the Jordan River. The Israel-Jordan peace treaty did not address other key issues, such as refugees. Palestinians, he noted, can get a job in Israel, but not a passport. For Jordanians, Palestinians are not neighbours but brothers who have been in the region for thousands of years and are entitled to their land. As for the problem of a "right of return," perhaps the Geneva proposals might offer a way out of this great dilemma. Mr. Masri observed that there were "piles" of ideas, including those developed through the Refugee Working Group chaired by Canada. Flexibility was possible in searching for a solution but it must be fair to the refugees.[302]

On Israel's part, it was observed that many Jewish immigrants do not speak Hebrew or Yiddish, and that Israel's high standard of living was in difficulty. Eventually, Israel would need to relax from a "war footing" that was damaging its economy. Israel needs security, Mr. Masri agreed, but who is the occupier and who has nuclear weapons? Israel's harsh military retaliation against attacks on it has the effect of radicalizing the Arab population, and meanwhile the Sharon government rejects the Geneva proposals and its approach to settlements destroys the concept of peace. This is simply no way for Israel to obtain the security it needs.

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[302] It was noted that 40% of UNRWA refugees live in the West Bank and Gaza, while another 42% are in Jordan; most of those are Jordanian citizens.

Directions for Canadian Policy

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to be an international policy minefield and will remain so into the foreseeable future. The perils of Middle East peace processes are such as to present outside governments with more certain dilemmas than rewards. None of this should be underestimated. In the Committee's view, this does not mean, however, that Canada cannot play a helpful role, arguably a greater role, in trying to improve prospects for peaceful evolution in the region, especially when the persistence of this conflict has been so often identified as of central concern in building a better relationship between Western and Muslim countries.

Canadian policy on the Middle East peace process, as stated to the 59th Session of the UN Human Rights Commission, argues strongly for working "to advance all efforts to encourage the negotiation of a comprehensive, just and durable peace... Such a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a necessary condition for ensuring stability across the region as a whole." The statement adds that "respect for human rights must also be built into a reinvigorated peace process. Israelis will not rest without a deeper sense of security. And Palestinians will not yield their basic requirements for dignity and self-determination. A durable, just solution to this conflict cannot come at the expense of either side's fundamental needs."[303]

In an address a year ago to the National Council on Canada-Arab Relations, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Bill Graham, a former Chair of this Committee, underlined the dual aspect of the principles underlying Canada's policy as follows:

> We have always supported a negotiated two-state solution to this problem, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in security and peace. Canada's support of Israel's right to exist within secure boundaries is fundamental to our policy. ... I also want to emphasize that Canada continues to call on Israel to meet its international human rights obligations. We are very concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories and we have urged Israel to ensure that Palestinians have access to food, water, medical supplies and social and educational services. We also urge Israel to freeze all settlement activity in the Occupied Territories. This would be a key step in rebuilding confidence among Palestinians in the viability of a peace process, and its ability to deliver tangible results for them.[304]

Canadian statements in multilateral forums have both unequivocally condemned all forms of terrorist violence and continued to express concerns about a deteriorating "dire humanitarian and economic situation in the Palestinian territories", as well as maintaining a consistent objection to Israeli settlements in these territories as "contrary to international law and especially unproductive for the peace process."[305]

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[303] Accessed at http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/Peaceprocess/canada_statements-en.asp.

[304] Address of February 11, 2003, accessed at http://webapps.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/minpub/Publication.asp?publication_id=379864&Language=E

With respect to processes for political negotiations, Canadian policy, while supporting a variety of peacebuilding activities, also remains firmly committed to the implementation of the Roadmap. As a Canadian statement at the United Nations in November 2003 put it, that commitment is "to the goal of two states living side by side in peace and security, the State of Israel and an independent, viable and democratic Palestinian State."[306]

What can Canada bring to current possibilities for reviving productive political negotiations? While witnesses told the Committee repeatedly that Canada is well regarded within the region, it is also the case that Canada is not generally seen as a major actor in the Middle East peace process. In the decade since the Oslo accords were signed, one focus of Canada's involvement has been on Palestinian refugee issues under the auspices of the United Nations and multilateral agencies. But some analysts contend that this track, and with it Canada's role, is a diminishing one. As a Canadian academic puts it:

> Aside from sporadic policy pronouncements, Canada is still engaged in modest humanitarian efforts, but in light of its declared dedication to development issues and peacebuilding — issues crucial to the success of any Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement — it is curious that the demise of the multilaterals has caused Canada's work as a regional facilitator to be stymied to such a degree ... Canada's absolute and relative diplomatic influence in the region has declined from that of a middle power to a minor power at best, at the same time the other third parties, such as the European Union, have taken an increasingly active role in international affairs.[307]

We do not necessarily share that marginalizing assessment. Canada's chairmanship of the working group on refugees gives us a continuing presence on issues that are critical to reaching any viable two-state peace agreement.[308]

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[305] Canadian statement on the Middle East to the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. The statement observes that: "Deepening poverty and malnutrition, particularly among Palestinian women and children, are chilling indications of the seriousness of the current situation. Besides becoming a grinding, daily routine for millions of Palestinians, widespread curfews and closures have impeded humanitarian access to those in need. In accordance with its obligations under international law, Israel must facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and ensure that Palestinians have full and unhindered access to basic needs including food, water and medical supplies."

[306] Statement by the Representative of Canada to the United Nations General Assembly, 4th Committee, New York, November 3, 2003.

[307] Sucharov, p. 319.

[308] A new report stresses the urgency of making progress on these issues. See *Palestinian Refugees and the Politics of Peacemaking*, Middle East Report No. 22, International Crisis Group, Amman/Brussels, February 5, 2004.

Canada is also providing support to innovative peacebuilding projects.[309] Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that Canada's acknowledged diplomatic assets in the region may not be sufficiently resourced, mobilized, and utilized to give concrete support to those who are engaged in the difficult and dangerous work of seeking peace and justice.

Canada needs to do more than just welcome peace initiatives by others and denounce the cruel effects of terrorism and violence. We need to be present in finding the solutions. While it is beyond the scope of this report to make detailed policy recommendations in this area, we trust that this matter will be among those considered by the forthcoming review of Canada's international policies announced in the Speech from the Throne of February 2004.

RECOMMENDATION 15

In order to encourage all possibilities for a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Government of Canada should consider how Canada can play a stronger role in supporting:

- **good governance, social development and educational efforts, working with pro-democracy partners in the region;**
- **conflict resolution, community dialogue and confidence-building measures that strengthen civil society;**
- **peacebuilding initiatives, including facilitating, sponsoring and hosting peace activities in the region, in addition to playing a more active role in advancing the established Roadmap process for political negotiations.**

RECOMMENDATION 16

Canada should ensure that its humanitarian and development assistance activities in the Palestinian territories make the maximum contribution to meeting human needs priorities while promoting peaceful and pluralistic solutions to the conflict.

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[309] For example, supporting peace-promoting childrens' educational television and other educational and cultural materials working with Israeli and Palestinian partners. (See, "Puppets for Peace", *Canada World View*, Issue 20, Autumn 2003, p. 16.) As cited earlier, in March 2004 CIDA also announced additional support for regional peacebuilding projects.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Canada should continue to impress upon Israeli and Palestinian authorities their responsibilities to respect international human rights obligations and their mutual interest in ending all violence, particularly terrorist violence targeting innocent civilians, and pursuing peace negotiations in good faith.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The longer term role and capabilities of Canadian diplomatic, defence, and development assistance resources in advancing the Middle East peace process should be re-assessed in the context of the forthcoming review of Canada's international policies announced by the Government in February 2004.

Jordan

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is, like Morocco, the first Muslim country visited by the Committee in the course of this study, an Arab kingdom without oil and wrestling with questions of socio-economic development and democratic reform. But Jordan's special circumstances also place it in the middle of the Middle East's evolving security crises. Jordan lies between Israel and Iraq, and next door to the occupied Palestinian territories; its future is bound up with a resolution to the central conflicts of the Middle East. Of Jordan's over five million people, a majority are Palestinians, and most of these have Jordanian citizenship.[310]

Jordan was one of the small successor states carved out of the collapsed Ottoman empire by the great-power negotiations that followed the First World War. Established as a monarchy under the Hashemite family since 1921, it became a British mandate territory under the League of Nations until independence in 1946 following the Second World War. The current ruler, King Abdullah II, succeeded his father King Hussein in 1999. Although Jordan has fought two wars against Israel, losing the West Bank of the Jordan river in the 1967 war, the Oslo accords of the early 1990s opened a window that allowed Jordan to follow Egypt's earlier example and enter into a bilateral peace treaty with Israel in 1994.

Jordan's monarchy — which retains executive power, albeit constrained by the views of tribal leaders and, to a lesser extent, the 110 members of a revived National Assembly to which elections were held in June 2003 — is considered to be a moderate ally of the United States and Western countries in the region. Jordan has been an active player in Middle East peace negotiations. Following the release of the Geneva Accord in early December 2003, King Abdullah and U.S. President Bush were reported to have discussed new Palestinian ceasefire proposals.[311] At the same time, issues such as the Iraq war and the lack of concrete progress on the Middle East roadmap for peace have provoked growing anger among the population and frustration in official circles. A major question is how well the Hashemite dynasty will be able to manage necessary processes of domestic political and socio-economic reform in the midst of these ongoing crises.

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[310] Jordan's population is mainly Sunni Muslim, though there is a political influential Christian minority of about 5% of the population.

A recent International Crisis Group (ICG) report on the challenges facing Jordan argues that the regime's stability depends on continuing a carefully managed process of democratic reforms. The report, which was referred to by one of the Committee's witnesses, Oraib Al-Rantawi of the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies in Amman, observes that: "Jordan has weathered the Middle East's recent storms, but to maintain stability it must decide how much democracy it now needs and can afford."[312] Jordan's leaders will have to tread a fine balance in both coping with such external developments and responding to internal pressures. The report describes the situation confronting King Abdullah in moving to open up the political space as a course that

> …is fraught with risks, not only because it may affect power relationships between a Palestinian-origin majority not yet fully integrated into Jordanian society and the tribes that have been traditional supporters of the monarchy, but also because it is seen by many as a policy pushed by a U.S. government that is distinctly unpopular with the Jordanian public. As in Egypt … U.S. policies in Iraq and on the Israel-Palestinian conflict are hurting the cause of political liberalisation in Jordan.
>
> The King seems to favour a measured process, making a strong pledge in support of democratic reform, relaxing restrictions on expression and association, and pushing for the establishment of a Centre for Human Rights and a Higher Media Council. In June, the government organised elections and revived Parliament after a two-year hiatus. Although the elections were free, their ground rules ensured a safe pro-regime parliament. These steps may not satisfy the strongest critics, but in circumstances where all agree the process could spin out of control if not carefully managed, they are probably realistic. Most of all, they are necessary as a means of addressing popular discontent over the economic situation and regional developments.[313]

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[311] See Steven Weisman, "Bush and Jordanian King Confer on Palestinian Plan", *The New York Times*, December 5, 2003.

[312] *The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratisation and Regional Instability*, Middle East Briefing, Amman/Brussels, October 8, 2003, "Media Release" summary.

[313] Ibid.

The Committee's meetings corroborated that assessment of the need for progress both on the Middle East peace process and on domestic political and economic reforms.

Witness Views in Jordan

Describing Jordan as an open society, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Shaher Bak recalled that Jordan and Canada had a cooperative relationship, particularly on human security issues. Discussions about democratization and dialogue between civilizations and religions were important, though not new, and were being stressed by the King. Mr. Bak also noted that Prince Hassan had established the Arab Thought Forum in 1981 to address the diversity of civilizations and cultures within the Arab world. Jordanian political life is evolving, he contended. Elections will eventually be only on the basis of merit. Jordan is opening a national dialogue to build relations between all parts of society, and hopefully these steps will be a positive example for other Muslim societies in the region.

Mr. Bak observed that the difficulties to be overcome included the fallout from September 11, for which Jordan had paid a huge economic price. He added that support for terrorism feeds on the despair caused by poverty and unemployment. Young people with nothing to do and no jobs are fertile ground. In Jordan, 70% of the population is under 20 years old and unemployment is high. Jobs require stability and stability requires peace. Without this, radicalism emerges. He urged consideration of all the elements — political, economic, and cultural — on which international cooperation is required. Within societies, there is a need for tolerance of other religions to be taught in schools. There should be no second-class citizens. Security is important, but without open dialogue between people — as the Geneva Initiative demonstrated between Israelis and Palestinians — innocent people will continue to pay the price.

On Iraq, Mr. Bak argued that only Iraqis can provide security. He indicated that Jordan will assist Iraq to build its police force and judiciary without being preoccupied with the legal framework for such efforts. The priority was to work with the Iraqi people because, as he put it, if your neighbour is insecure, you will never sleep. He argued that Jordan was well placed to be a channel for such assistance working with the United Nations and the Iraqi provisional authorities, and he welcomed Canadian participation in that effort.

With respect to governance and other reforms to promote investor confidence and create jobs in the region, Mr. Bak regretted the absence of an effective regional organization due to the Palestine problem. In his view, the Arab League had proven to be a failure in terms of fostering regional development, and that was again contingent on a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He agreed that there was a need for a change in the region's power structures, and observed that most political initiatives of the past 30 years had been "filtered" through Jordan. An upcoming example of that was a conference to be held in May 2004 on water as a regional issue.

The Committee's subsequent encounter with Jordanian parliamentarians led by the Assembly's Speaker, marked the first such exchange between Canadian and Jordanian elected representatives. They expressed appreciation for Canada's development assistance to Jordan and welcomed an opening of new prospects for political dialogue. They were also candid in their concerns about the problems suffered by their people as a result of what they considered to be a half century of wars and unjust occupation of Arab land. Once more there are doubts over another foreign occupation in the name of fighting terrorism. They gave credit to King Hussein for leading the country courageously to peace with Israel. Jordanians, they stated, reject violence. But in their view, resistance to occupation is another matter and cannot be equated to terrorism. Hence in looking forward to peace, Jordanians also look forward to freedom, dignity and the end of the occupation of Palestine and Iraq. U.S. policies in the region must change or it will be more difficult to continue dialogue. As for Islamist extremists, there will always be some but, they insisted, Islam is a religion of tolerance.

The Committee's meetings with civil society representatives addressed a range of issues related to political development in Jordan, the role of women, the nature of the Palestinian situation and the ability of Jordan's governments to respond to pressing economic and social issues in the absence of progress on key regional security issues. Oraib Rantawi, Director of the Al Quds Centre for Political Studies recalled the two major conflicts that had shaped the region: the Arab-Israeli conflict of the past century and the conflicts involving Iraq in the past 20 years. For many years, the Palestinian cause had been an excuse to justify the failure of political and economic reforms in the region. He observed that the reform process on economic issues was moving ahead in Jordan, but achieving an effective civil society was still a long way away. Besides the political reforms needed, poverty, unemployment, and empowerment for women were among the priorities requiring action. Mr. Rantawi added that Jordan's government also had much work to do in order to deal with religious fundamentalists, social conservatives and the regime's old guard. Expressing appreciation for the Canadian position on the Iraq war, he hoped that Canada could play a bridge-building role and provide support to Jordan on security and good governance issues.

Amal Sabbagh, Secretary General of Jordan's National Commission for Women, noted that in 1997, 17 women had contested Assembly seats but none were successful. It had taken a quota to get women into parliament. After six years of lobbying for such a quota, it was granted by King Abdullah, not the government. With the current quota of six women, questions had turned to the nature of the selection mechanism, the number of seats and the bias toward smaller districts. Mrs. Sabbagh observed that the government wants a national dialogue but the elections law was not likely to be a part of the dialogue. However, she was encouraged by regional meetings of parliamentarians with women across Jordan and the substantive, articulate and focused nature of those dialogues that helped to dispel the notion that "women's advocacy" was driven by elite women in the capital of Amman. As a result, the male parliamentarians were recognizing women as an important voting group in the next elections.

Mouin Rabbani, senior analyst for the International Crisis Group in Amman, noted that there were three themes running through politics in Jordan. First, people feel a lack of adequate political representation. This was especially true for women but also for the general population, even with the recent parliamentary elections. Many people feel that decisions are made without their consent or involvement. Second, they feel there is a lack of adequate participation in the strategy of economic and social development. He explained that the focus on economic reform was not the result of an indigenous process but rather was the result of IMF intervention and strategic considerations. Consequently, there was little room to adjust the process and its priorities did not necessarily enjoy popular support. Third, in his view, the regional crises of Iraq and the Israel-Palestinian conflict had left people in Jordan feeling unable to affect the realities in the region that were of the most interest to them. While Jordan's political evolution was an advantage compared to rigid autocracies like Syria or Saudi Arabia, it was still an underdeveloped society, a fact that fostered the development of what he termed "extra-legal movements".

These witnesses also pointed out that many Muslims aspired to democracy and merely debated the form of democracy. Structures for democratic representation and human rights protection would have to be adapted to the particular features of a traditional society like Jordan's. They did not put much store in either the role of the Arab League[314] or in external interventions such as the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq (which was not considered a threat to Jordan but rather a commercial partner). One pointed out that, according to a recent poll, 74% of Jordanians consider the U.S. as the biggest threat to the region, the highest percentage among all Arab countries, for several reasons including its seemingly unconditional support for Israel.

At the same time, they considered that Canada's political capital in the region was high, given our position on the Iraq war. Canada was also seen as having a reputation for not socially excluding minorities and for taking an approach to the question of the Islamic world's relations with the West that is much different from and more acceptable than that of the U.S. These Jordanians urged Canada to continue to deal with civil society institutions in the Arab world, whose engagement is essential to the reform process. One of the challenges they saw is how to deal with the U.S. on these issues without being driven by a U.S. agenda.

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[314] These spokespersons dismissed the Arab League as a useful forum. They pointed out that most Arab regimes have no legitimacy and therefore no leverage to exert pressure on each other to conform to standards of conduct. Moreover, Arab structures have failed to solve problems between Arab countries, from Algeria and Tunisia to Sudan, Yemen and Bahrain.

In another roundtable with a group of senior Jordanian journalists, the Committee also came away with the impression that there is a Canadian role in supporting media, human rights and other civil society institutions in the region. The exchanges revealed ongoing concerns about press freedoms in Jordan as well as for the future of the Palestinian people. It was observed that King Abdullah's focus on economic and social development was accompanied by retrenchment on political issues, including media freedom, noting a new restrictive law that was passed 28 days after September 11, 2001 and the prosecutions that have taken place under this law, including for moral and religious reasons. Moreover, the law made it difficult to report on accusations of impropriety without being exposed to charges. Internal censorship also exists, both in the form of editors toning down stories they expect to be outside the bounds of the acceptable, and in the form of late night calls from the security services to editors suggesting that certain stories not be printed.

While the King himself is widely viewed as progressive on these issues, he is surrounded by conservative security services and other elements of the old guard who are preoccupied with the long-term stability of the regime. There were signs, however, of the beginnings of a movement to allow a more open political environment to re-emerge, including on media issues. One of the problems identified is that journalism is a low-paying profession that lacks respect from officials. The cause of press freedom would also be helped if the government were to sell its shares in the major daily papers.

Another problem noted was that there is virtually no positive coverage of Israel in the press, combined with a constant emphasis on the difficult situation of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. That reflects the widely held view of the Israeli behaviour as that of an armed occupation of unarmed people. However mention was made of an upcoming investigative journalism review of Jordanian-Israeli bilateral relations that would reveal a wealth of regular contact at the "committee level" under the auspices of the bilateral peace treaty. It was also pointed out that in addition to contacts on foreign policy issues, bilateral cooperation projects with Israel have increased, such as on practical economic issues and a survey of the Rift Valley. There is also good cooperation on border and security relations. In the education field, many Jordanian masters and doctoral students are studying at Israeli universities, 28 in the environment field alone. Yet this information is rarely reported.

The views of former prime minister Taher Masri and former foreign minister Abdullah Ensour in regard to the Middle East peace process have already been noted in the preceding chapter. There are several additional important overall points to add from their wide-ranging comments to the Committee. One is their assessment that, even with peace on the Israel-Palestinian fronts, democratic, economic and social development throughout the region would only follow slowly and not necessarily automatically. They conceded that Israel's existence had been used by many to build and consolidate undemocratic regimes. Peace would expose leaders to pressures for democratization. Changes in the status of women and improvements in the education system might then start moving in the right direction, but these processes would be gradual.

Another point they made is that many in the region are willing to engage with Canada in meeting such challenges. There is fertile ground for working cooperatively in the building of civil society. Mr. Masri recalled the substantial aid Canada had provided to Jordan and the Arab world. He expressed appreciation for a Canadian stance that is regarded as being objective on issues, emphasizing that Jordanians have no complaints about Canada's "political behaviour". Echoing these comments, Mr. Ensour saw further political exchanges as "part of the remedy" to the current situation. He argued that they should be institutionalized given that Canada was one of the few countries that could be part of the solution. The ongoing conflict had "minimized civilization" in the region. Once freed from that tragic context, perhaps better things would be possible.

Directions for Canadian Policy

The Committee sees Jordan as an important potential bridge between the West and the Muslim world in an area facing the need to recover and move on from generations of violence and terror. Jordan has benefited from significant Canadian development assistance amounting to approximately $86 million over the past decade focused on education and training, water and sanitation, and peacebuilding. Canada has both an investment and a long-term interest in Jordan's continued socio-economic development, in its progress along a sustainable path of liberal-democratic reform, and in its ability to contribute to an ultimate resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On all these counts, Canadian policy should make every effort to encourage and support Jordan's evolution as a more open and outward-looking society that is engaged in bringing about positive changes for the peoples of the Middle East and for international order as a whole. We note that when Raja Khouri of the Canadian Arab Federation appeared before the Committee in Ottawa and referred to the need to support and build on efforts within Canada and the Muslim world to improve dialogue, intercultural and interfaith understanding, pluralism and non-violent conflict resolution, he cited the motto of a Jordanian-based organization, the South-North Centre for Dialogue and Development that states eloquently and succinctly: "People involved in dialogue are no longer people involved in conflict, but people seeking solutions."[315]

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Government of Canada should strongly encourage the Government of Jordan to continue along a path of liberalizing socio-economic, democratic, good governance and human rights reforms. Canada should also pursue cooperation with Jordan on regional peace and democracy-building objectives, including cultivating channels for interfaith dialogue and for political dialogue at both official and civil-society levels.

Morocco

> *Morocco is embracing change while preserving its timeless identity: a historical State where the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Sahara meet, a land of dialogue and tolerance for the Berber, Arab, Islamic, Jewish, Mediterranean and African cultures and civilizations. The Moroccans are warm, hospitable and peaceful people. They are a people with a deeply rooted identity, yet open to modernity. Moroccans practice Islam, a religion of kindness and of respect for human life, a religion of tolerance and solidarity. Morocco is a haven of peace, stability and moderation in the Mediterranean and in the world.*[316]
>
> Moroccan Prime Minister Driss Jettou
> January, 2004

> *... free political discussion is far broader than it once was but both democracy and Islam in Morocco still exist very much within the framework of royal control. While the robust multiparty system holds out hope for increasing legislative power in Morocco, it remains to be seen how Muhammad will rule in the long run, and whether he will expand the scope of democracy ...*[317]
>
> Noah Feldman

Morocco is widely acknowledged as one of leading states in the Arab world in terms of political reform, and Moroccans argue that the fact that their King also acts as "Commander of the Faithful" helps ensure that Islam as practiced in Morocco remains moderate. The Committee's visit to Morocco largely confirmed these views, yet also underlined the need to continue assisting Morocco as it continues to pursue political, economic and social reform.

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[315] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 53, (1120).

[316] Address by the R.H. Driss Jettou, Prime Minister of Morocco, before the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, January 8, 2004.

[317] Noah Feldman, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2003, p. 151.

Monarchy and Reform

Morocco's population of some 31 million is almost totally Berber-Arab and Muslim. A traditional link between Europe and Africa, Morocco is located at the western extremity of the Arab-Muslim world, and, with Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Tunisia comprises the geographical area known as the Maghreb. A French protectorate from 1912 to 1956, Morocco recovered its independence in 1955 with the return of the Sultan of Morocco (future King Mohammed V) and the formation of the first independent Moroccan government. Although independence came after a long struggle in which religion played a role, this process in Morocco was much less violent than in neighbouring state and regional rival Algeria.

The Monarchy remains the dominant foundation of both Morocco's society and its government. Article I of Morocco's constitution defines it as a Muslim state and a constitutional, democratic and social monarchy. The Monarch acts both as the central figure in the government, with the power among others to appoint the Prime Minister, change the constitution and refuse to amend laws, and in religious terms as "Commander of the Faithful." As one expert has explained, the widely accepted view internationally is "That the king is both religious and secular leader ... anchors political legitimacy in compromise, cooperation and consensus that rejects violent confrontation."[318]

King Mohammed V was succeeded in 1961 by his son, King Hassan II, who was to rule Morocco for almost 40 years. As Feldman has observed, while Hassan II allowed multiple political parties in Morocco, for most of his reign he kept the legislature relatively powerless, and appointed royalist prime ministers and governments. In 1998, however, he appointed a prime minister from what had long been the main opposition party, a move Feldman calls "remarkable progress toward democracy."[319]

Hassan II was succeeded in July 1999 by his son, Mohammed VI, who, after receiving a law degree in Morocco had served as an aide to Jacques Delors at the European Union, and worked on an advanced law degree in France. The King began his reign by immediately firing his late father's minister of the interior, a man widely blamed for the repression of dissidents and other abuses. Mohammed VI generally accepted to be one of the leading reformers in the Arab world — Feldman argues, in fact, that he and King Abdullah of Jordan "may … represent the best hope for the development of Islamic democracy in the Arab world."[320] The first *Arab Human Development Report* cited Morocco as an example of progress in the Arab world, noting "recent democratic reforms in Morocco," and "the achievement of Moroccan women's associations in breaking down old taboos."[321] This latter point about the role of women in Morocco was also made before the Committee in Ottawa by Mazen Chouaib of the National Council on Canada Arab Relations.[322]

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[318] John P. Entelis, "Morocco: Democracy Denied," *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 2002, (English edition).

[319] Feldman, p. 151.

A number of witnesses before the Committee agreed on the nature and importance of reforms in Morocco. In New York, Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, a former Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan who, as UN Assistant Secretary General and Director of the UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States was responsible for the production of the landmark *Arab Human Development Reports*, told the Committee that Morocco had been moving ahead in terms of elections, women in parliament, serious political parties and domestic reconciliation; she would rate it among the top reformers among Arab countries. Dr. Isobel Coleman of the Council on Foreign Relations added that the King saw himself as a young reformer nudging the country along the road to change, for example, through the establishment of quotas to ensure representation of women in the landmark September 2002 election. She also argued that, among other cases, the experience of Morocco has suggested that allowing Islamist parties to participate in elections results in their being less radical.

Addressing Political and Social Challenges

Despite a relatively low turnout, the 2002 election is accepted as the first ever transparent one held in Morocco, and saw the election of 34 women. At least as important was the fact that the government allowed one moderate Islamist party, the Justice and Development Party, to participate, and it won enough support to make it the third largest group in parliament, and the arguably most effective parliamentary opposition in the view of some.[323] At the same time, the fact that the government did not allow the more popular — and less moderate — Justice and Benevolence Party to participate was seen by most as evidence that more remains to be done in terms of democratization in Morocco. Some were more critical. American political scientist John Entelis argued soon after the election that:

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[320] Ibid., p. 150.

[321] *New York Times*, July 4, 2002, cited in Entelis, 2002.

[322] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1725)

[323] Jon Marks, "Morocco: A Strange Climate of Insecurity," Royal United Services Institute, *RUSI* Newsbrief, Vol. 23, Issue 9, September 2003.

> To understand the gap between image and reality in Morocco we must analyse the change that the country has experienced in these last two decades. The current generation of young adults has grown up on broken promises, false hopes, unrealistic expectations, cultural uncertainty and political manipulation. Corruption and elite privileges prevail at the highest levels of political authority, setting a standard for those below.[324]

Apart from democratization and governance, the major challenges facing Morocco continue to be economic development, illiteracy — overall rates are high, and reach about 70% for women — unemployment and the marginalization of women. With Canadian and other help, King Mohammed VI has put significant emphasis on education reform. As Noah Feldman has noted "the more educated people are, the more they seek a say in governing themselves. That is why promoting literacy and education are brave (or risky) strategies for a monarch."[325] In addition, after years of discussion, in the fall of 2003 the King finally introduced a revised Family Relations Act (*Moudawana)* in parliament, explaining that he did so both as King and as Commander of the Faithful. Long before the revised law was presented, however, Islamists protesting the reform on the streets had outnumbered a pro-reform demonstration by roughly 3 to 1.[326]

The May 2003 suicide bombings of five separate targets in Casablanca, which killed 39 and injured 60 (less than a week after the Committee's visit to Morocco), exposed a real physical security threat to the country. The government moved quickly to address this threat — too quickly, in the opinion of some. Some 634 people were charged in connection with the bombings, leading human rights groups to argue that this has been used as a pretext to arrest so-called extremists. In an open letter to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell in advance of a December 2003 trip to North Africa, Human Rights Watch argued that:

> In Morocco, a crackdown under new anti-terror legislation that intensified after the May 17 attacks in Casablanca is eroding the substantial advances made on human rights over the last decade. Years after the practice of "disappearances" was halted and the incidence of torture dropped, there are again reports of suspicious deaths in detention and persons who remain unaccounted for months after their arrest. We urge you to encourage Moroccan authorities to pursue the detention, investigation, and trials of suspected militants in a way that preserves the progress that made it one of the countries in the region most respectful of human rights.
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> It is critical also that Moroccan authorities reaffirm their commitment to press freedom. One step they should take is to release imprisoned journalists, notably Ali Mrabet, editor of *Demain* and *Douman*, independent weeklies in French and Arabic that were closed down by court order. Mrabet is serving three years in prison after being convicted in May of "insulting the

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[324] Entelis, October 2002, English edition (online).

[325] Feldman, p. 149.

[326] Jay Tolson, "Faith and Freedom," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 10, 2003.

king," "undermining the monarchy, and "endangering the integrity of national territory" for articles, interviews and cartoons he published.[327]

In January 2004, Mohammed VI granted clemency to 33 people deemed subversive, including a dozen Islamists, a dozen independence campaigners from Western Sahara and several journalists, including Ali Mrabet. At least as importantly, in December 2003 he announced that a Justice and Reconciliation Commission would be established to produce a definitive account of human rights abuses in Morocco over the past few decades. According to an assessment in *The Economist*: "If this does its job well it may set an example for the entire Arab world."[328]

Apart from the terrorist threat demonstrated by the 2003 bombings, one analyst has argued that other factors also contribute to "a strange climate of insecurity" in Morocco.[329] Economically, Feldman has noted that "Morocco is on both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, but it is not the gateway to anywhere but the Sahara Desert, and its productivity is not what it should be."[330] While the pace of economic reform has not resolved problems such as high unemployment, however, it has led to an exodus from the country to the cities, a trend that will increase if a free trade agreement offered by the United States requires real agricultural reform. The difficulty of officially migrating to Europe has also led to an increase in unofficial migration. Jon Marks adds that, "Many employed professionals believe that in an economy still dominated by family-led companies they can enjoy a comfortable lifestyle but may aspire to no more; for these groups, lack of social mobility has meant tens of thousands have applied to leave for one country which might still take them legally, Canada."[331]

A final issue contributing to a sense of insecurity is the fate of the Western Sahara, which remains a key issue in Moroccan politics. The territory was virtually annexed by Morocco in 1975 when King Hassan II organized the "Green March" by some 350,000 unarmed volunteers. Morocco considers this part of its sovereign territory, yet it remains disputed, and with the end of the Cold War international pressure for a diplomatic solution has increased. In July 2003, the United Nations Security Council voted to accept a plan drawn up by former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker that some believe may lead to the loss of the territory to the independence — seeking POLISARIO front in several years. One expert argued in September 2003 that "As he turns forty and after five years on the throne, the Sahara, more even than Islamic radicalism, could prove the defining issue of King Mohammed's reign."[332]

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[327] Human Rights Watch. Letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell Regarding His Visit to North Africa, November 25, 2003.

[328] "An Arab First." *The Economist*, January 24, 2004, p. 41.

[329] Marks, 2003.

[330] Feldman, p. 148.

[331] Marks, 2003.

Witnesses Views in Morocco

Witnesses in Morocco welcomed the Committee's visit as an example of the type of dialogue needed between the Muslim world and Western states. They also welcomed the chance to explain the many challenges facing the country, and to lay to rest myths and generalizations propagated by the media about Muslim states that they argued did not apply to Morocco.

On the domestic level, they underlined continuing challenges related to the lack of democracy, widespread illiteracy and the role of women, particularly in the countryside. Academic Fahd Regragui added that we should look at people rather than religions, and that issues such as illiteracy are not the fault of Islam, but of governments. These challenges have resulted in social pressures and strengthened the appeal of extremists. Mohammed Tozy argued that the development of a strong Islamism in Morocco has been very slow. Many witnesses argued that the fact that the King is also "Commander of the Faithful" has reduced the latitude for the political use of religion by others in the country.

Mohammed-Allal Sinaceur, a human rights expert, former minister and, more importantly, "Conseiller de Sa Majesté le Roi" argued that the fact that there is a single juridical and pragmatic (Maliki) Islam in Morocco explains what does *not* happen there. At the same time, the late Hassan II had thought about the problems of a more politicized Islam, and fought against it. Speaking in Arabic, member of Parliament Fatima Moustaghfi argued that while Morocco was poor economically it was culturally rich. She saw her role as an MP as being to protect her Moroccan culture and help work toward human rights and values. While the King was also the Commander of the Faithful, she noted that at their wedding his bride had not been veiled.

Lahcen Daoudi, a member of Parliament from the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party argued that Islam had always stressed consultation which was the basis of democracy; while the form may be different, it was the principles that count. As to whether Islamists could "deliver" in the political process, since it had taken centuries to do so in the West, it was unrealistic to expect this in a decade elsewhere. While human rights are not to be violated in Islam, he added that there were both individual and group rights. People could do what they liked in their homes, but had to recognize that there are different rules when they are outside in the "collective space." While Islam is not violent, people do not know their religion and so can be told anything. On the other hand, people are not born violent, they become violent and this is society's responsibility. While elites in Morocco thought modernity was around the corner, this was not true and there existed a gap between them and the people. Education is a universal remedy without which nothing would change. Moreover, education and justice must be recognized as a solution while punishment is not.

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[332] Ibid.

On the international scene, many witnesses raised the issue of the Palestinians as an example of the frustration felt by Muslims around the world. Some defended the use of suicide bombings as the only means available to Palestinians to combat Israeli occupation. Lawyer and political activist Khalid Seffiani argued that the origin of extremism was violence and occupation such as that by Israel in Palestine. Palestinians were justified in responding to occupation in the same way that Charles de Gaulle had fought the German occupation of France, and he therefore disagreed with Canada's decision to list Hizbollah as a terrorist group. On the other hand, he did not see the West as a monolithic bloc: while he would have refused to meet with an American delegation, he appreciated EU efforts, and believed Canada should join it in an attempt to establish a political counterweight to the United States. Mohammed Tozy agreed that it was important not to equate groups such as Hizbollah, which were willing to enter into negotiations, with Osama bin Laden.

While noting that the Arab world is disgusted with the injustice and blatant policy of double standards on the issue of Palestine and recommending Canada do more to try to resolve the situation, businessman Abdelmalek Kettani noted that in some respects the Palestinian problem was "viagra" for Arab leaders. While they were not fans of the regime of Saddam Hussein, a number of witnesses also condemned the invasion of Iraq. Khalid Seffiani argued that while he had never liked the regime of Saddam Hussein, no one had the right to overthrow it.

Witnesses praised Canadian policy both on the international and domestic levels. Internationally, several argued that Canada should continue to follow international law, and pursue a policy different from that of the United States. All stressed the need for continued dialogue, and many argued that Canada and its G-8 and EU allies could help Morocco and other Muslim states in terms of economic and technical aid to support education and democratization. Abdelmalek Kettani recommended on behalf of the NGO "Alternatives" that in the short term, Canada and other G-8 states should take countries that were making good progress in governance, such as Morocco, and use them as an example in the broader Arab world. Among other things, they suggested they could establish a fund to help civil society group address modernity. He also singled out student exchanges as a particularly useful vehicle to help overall understanding.

Directions for Canadian Policy

Canada and Morocco have maintained diplomatic relations since 1962. The backbone of these relations for the first three decades was Canadian development assistance. Initially focusing on institutional support, training and education and later shifting to assist in developing Morocco's private sector in areas such as management and technology, this amounted to about $400 million between 1963 and 1998. Given that most assistance was due to end in 2003, after consultations with the Moroccan government and civil society, a decision was made to refocus assistance in the three areas of basic education, job training and social development. Paul Hunt of CIDA told the Committee that:

> … recently, with the authorities and civil society groups in Morocco, we have refocused Canada's contribution program to focus on basic education. Why? It's the key to a series of positive development changes that take place in a society. And the Moroccan authorities were very keen to have Canada's capacity in this area in both languages and in a way that was to accompany their efforts to put in place a reform strategy for basic education.[333]

Canadian assistance to Morocco totalled some $5.45 million in fiscal year 2002-2003. The Canadian Embassy in Morocco has a $265,000 Canada Fund for Local Initiatives to assist civil society groups, and a $500,000 fund to promote gender equality.

Canada now has a Moroccan community of some 60,000 — mainly in Montreal — and about 1,000 Moroccan students come to Canada to study each year (Moroccans are the third largest group of foreign students in Quebec). In addition to development assistance, the Canadian government has recognized Morocco as an important and moderate Muslim state and a member of la Francophonie, and has worked to strengthen relations. Gwynne Dyer commented to the Committee in London on the successful and valuable work the Canadian government had done raising Canada's profile in the Francophone parts of the Muslim world, including the Maghreb, adding that this was money well spent.

The Committee agrees that how Morocco addresses its own challenges has the potential to set an example for other Arab states. Canada should therefore continue to assist Morocco in pursuing further democratization and development.

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[333] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 50 (1150).

RECOMMENDATION 20

Canada should continue to encourage and provide support to the Government of Morocco as it pursues its broad program of reform. In particular, Canada should increase assistance in the area of education, and continue assistance for democratization, governance reform and strengthening civil society.

PART IV: CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

> *While the religious heart of Islam might be in Mecca and Medina and in the Arab world, the demographic heart of Islam is in South Asia and southeast Asia.* [334]
>
> M.J. Akbar

> *Canada is the only English-speaking country they want to deal with, be it in education, be it in foreign aid … this is in Southeast and South Asia, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia, where you're dealing with at least 250 million Muslims. There Canada is viewed as a middle power with a economic, political, and social conscience. This is the opportunity we have to seize, but this wonderful image we have, rightly so, in my opinion, leaves us terribly heavy responsibilities as well. This is a time to act.* [335]
>
> Uner Turgay

More than half of the world's Muslims live in South and Southeast Asia. These sub-regions include the most populous Muslim country, Indonesia; that with the largest Muslim minority, India; and the only country conceived explicitly as a state for Muslims and also a democracy, Pakistan.[336] Malaysia, another important regional state, played host to the OIC's 10th Summit at the time of the Committee's visit in October 2003. While no single factor can explain the dynamism of a continent as large, diverse and important as Asia, considering it from the perspective of Islam serves two purposes. First, it illuminates a key factor in the dynamics of much of Asia, particularly the key sub-regions of South and Southeast Asia. Second, and at least as important given current priorities in international affairs, it underlines that much received wisdom in the West about the "Muslim" world — such as the supposed incompatibility of Islam and democracy, and the religiously motivated subordination of women — is in fact based on the much smaller Arab world. The countries of South and Southeast Asia, including those with Muslim majorities, have in fact had much more success with democracy than the Arab world. Moreover, even though women are still discriminated against on a global basis, these same countries have had a higher number of women leaders over the years than have Western ones. While some counter that these women achieved power based on family ties, *The Economist* pointed out in December 2003 that this practice is global, arguing that "in much of Asia dynastic politics takes the form of a male-to-female transfer, following the American pattern of widows stepping into their dead husband's shoes. In Asia, though, a coup or an assassination, or both, often serves to hurry the succession along."[337]

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[334] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1145).

[335] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1630).

[336] Noah Feldman, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy*, Farrar, Strauss and Géroux, New York, 2003, p. 119.

In London, Dr. Bavna Dave of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London also emphasized the importance of the five Muslim majority states of Central Asia, particularly after the events of September 2001, and recommended increased Canadian attention to them. The Committee agrees, having visited three of these states in 2000, and tabled a report in June 2001 which raised the geopolitical dangers both of a lack of progress on socio-economic, democratic and human rights reforms, and the challenge posed by militant Islam within Central Asia, a region bordering Afghanistan (then still under Taliban rule), Pakistan and Iran.

In its report, the Committee recommended that the Government of Canada develop specific policies related to Central Asia which echo many of the themes raised in this broader study of relations with the countries of the Muslim world. In particular, the report's recommendations on Central Asia called for strengthening relations in the following areas:

- Regional stability and peacebuilding;
- Broader long-term economic relationships and sustainable development;
- Democratic governance reforms, human rights and support to civil society;
- Human resources, education and culture.[338]

While largely agreeing with the Committee's analysis of the importance of the region, the government's response tabled in October 2001 noted that "available resources will remain scarce: Canadian technical assistance will remain modest, and our representation sparse." The result was few substantive changes. Given major developments affecting the region since 2001, the Committee believes it would now be useful for the government to revisit the Committee's recommendations in the context of its response to this report.

RECOMMENDATION 21

Given the importance of the states of Central Asia and the developments that have taken place there since September 2001, the Government of Canada should revisit the recommendations

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[337] "Born to Rule: Is Politics in the Blood, or in the Genes?" *The Economist*, December 20, 2003, p. 41.

[338] See SCFAIT *Advancing Canadian Foreign Policy Objectives in the South Caucasus and Central Asia*, June 2001, Recommendation 5.

contained in the Committee's 2001 report *Advancing Canadian Foreign Policy Objectives in the South Caucasus and Central Asia* in the context of reviewing its relations with the countries of the Muslim world.

More generally, while Canadian business interest in Asia and government attention to that region waned after the economic crises of the late 1990s, a good case can now be made for re-engagement.[339] The economic case is the most obvious: economic growth in China and the so-called "Asian tigers" has been impressive for several decades; as has related, if uneven, poverty reduction. Asia is expected to account for nearly 60% of world income by 2025, up from about 40% today.[340] Beyond economics, however, Asia continues to be important to global security. It is moreover the source of most new Canadians. Despite a traditional tendency to focus attention almost exclusively on the major Asian powers of China, Japan and India, such a focus does justice neither to the complexity of Asia itself, nor to the range of Canadian interests and values there.

Understanding the Role of Islam in Asia

Witnesses in Ottawa and throughout the Muslim world repeatedly argued that while a small but vocal minority of Muslims are violent extremists, the vast majority are moderate, but silent. This argument was made even more strongly in Asia, since, as witnesses in the regions repeatedly pointed out, Islam came to Asia mainly with traders, rather than — or, in India's case, as well as with — conquerors. Islam in Asia does have a strong tradition of tolerance. At the same time, the global political revival of Islam over the past two decades has been felt there as well, and has become increasingly important in domestic and foreign affairs, both in established democracies such as Malaysia and in new ones such as Indonesia. As Uner Turgay explained:

> A common assumption of the plans developed by western theorists and economists and sold to, or indeed imposed upon, Muslim countries through international diplomacy and pressures has been that modernization weakens religious traditions, since it nurtures the process of secularization. However, this has not been the case. Certainly, in the countries I visited recently, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Dar es Salaam, and Pakistan, the question is not whether Islam is compatible with political development, but rather how much and what kind of Islam is compatible, indeed necessary, for political development. The same question is asked regarding economic policies.

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[339] See, for example, Daryl Copeland "Diversifying Canada's Dependence: Look East," *Asian Perspective*, Volume 27, No. 4, 2003.

[340] Ibid. In November 2003, the Committee tabled a report by its Subcommittee on International Trade, Trade Disputes and Investment on *Reinvigorating Economic Relations Between Canada and Asia-Pacific*.

He also noted that "Islamists in South and Southeast Asia today … are stronger than in any other period in recent history."[341]

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has recognized the role of Islam in Asia as a key both to developments in the region and to the identification of constructive Canadian policies there. It has therefore begun to sponsor academic and other dialogue designed to gain a deeper understanding in this area, build relationships — including with a new generation of leaders — and identify practical policies to pursue. There is real interest in the regions in pursuing dialogue both on economic and development cooperation, and on such Canadian values as pluralism and multiculturalism. However, the type of democracy which emerges in Muslim majority and others states in Asia may well not be identical to our own, since, even apart from the influence of Islam, there may be broader Asian influences as well. As Noah Feldman argued before the Committee when asked about balancing group and individual rights, "One sees this already in a country like South Korea, for example, which is a democracy by anyone's measure today, but its political values do tend to be more communitarian in many ways than say, the United States', which is on the other end of the continuum, arguably."[342]

Having heard from witnesses in Ottawa and visited key states in South and Southeast Asia, the Committee agrees with the need to pursue long-term policies such as those described in Part II, emphasizing dialogue, education and support for civil society, and drawing on all instruments of Canadian foreign policy. It also notes the words of Noah Feldman:

> … I think it's a mistaken impression — which is shared, by the way, broadly in the United States as well — that the solution to the problems of promoting democracy, women's rights, and human rights in the region is more money. Money is helpful, but in countries that are relatively poor — that's certainly true of the countries of South and Southeast Asia — a little money can go a long way if it's properly spent. When it comes, for example, to promoting education, sometimes all that's necessary is not to pay for the full curriculum or the school building; just to pay for school lunch in one set of schools will encourage parents to send their children to those schools, for no other reason than to get the free lunch. One can increase attendance by such small moves pretty effectively.[343]

South Asia: Regional Overview

South Asia comprises eight countries — Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — which occupy a landmass half the size of China and are home to one quarter of humanity. South Asia boasts the three largest Muslim populations in the world after Indonesia, with at least 400 million Muslims in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. The countries of South Asia face daunting challenges of development and democratization. However, the past several years have focused international attention on the major security challenges in the region. In addition to complicating the achievement of development and democratization, those security challenges are seen by some as having links to Islam in one way or another — from the continued presence of self-proclaimed jihadists in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to long-standing tensions between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan (mainly over the fate of Muslim-majority Kashmir), and concerns about possible proliferation given Pakistan's possession of what some have called the world's only "Islamic bomb."

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[341] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1545).

[342] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 57 (1205).

[343] Ibid. (1140).

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf denied that his country had been involved in any nuclear proliferation in a meeting with Parliamentarians in Ottawa in September 2003; in February 2004, however, Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear program, admitted selling nuclear information and material to other countries, and was promptly pardoned by General Musharraf.

Achieving Security

The international war on terrorism has focused attention on South Asia. This sub-region was the birthplace of modern international jihadism, as the United States and allies such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan financed and trained Muslim *mujahedeen* ("holy warrior") forces to carry out what, as Indian journalist M.J. Akbar pointed out to the Committee, were basically suicide missions against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.[344] This jihad was successful, but the vacuum that followed the Soviet retreat from Afghanistan was soon occupied by Taliban (religious student) forces, who gave shelter and support to al-Qaeda. Despite the overthrow of the Taliban in 2002, the security situation in Afghanistan outside Kabul remains very dangerous and threatens to derail the stabilization and reconstruction of the country. As analysts from the Department of National Defence argued in mid-2003, "together, Afghanistan and Pakistan probably boast the highest concentration of jihadists anywhere, and thus the US and other governments — including Canada's — are, and will remain, actively involved in efforts to reduce the attractiveness of those countries as nurseries of jihad. On the one hand, this involves trying to bolster the authority of the interim Afghan government and to defeat Islamist guerrilla groups in Afghanistan. On the other, it involves steering a fine line between rewarding Pakistan's campaign against al-Qaeda while at the same time avoiding abetting Islamabad's covert support for jihadist groups in Kashmir."[345]

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[344] For details, see Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, The Penguin Press, New York, 2004.

[345] Tony Kellett and Elizabeth Speed, "Whither Jihadist Terrorism," in *Strategic Assessment 2003*, Ottawa, Department of National Defence, Directorate of Strategic Analysis, Ottawa, September 2003, p.110.

Canada has played a major role in the international effort to stabilize Afghanistan, militarily, in terms of reconstruction and development, and diplomatically. Canada's military has made an important contribution in Afghanistan, including assuming the leadership of NATO's International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan; it has also paid the heaviest possible cost, that of Canadian lives. In addition, Canada has made an important contribution towards meeting the many humanitarian and other needs of Afghanistan; its $250 million pledge in March 2003 was CIDA's single largest country pledge ever. Finally, Canada has played an important role diplomatically, both on a multilateral level and bilaterally, opening Canada's first embassy in Afghanistan.[346]

Noah Feldman noted before the Committee that the new constitution of Afghanistan recently unveiled

> … is really a fascinating document, because on the one hand it does … specify that this is an Islamic republic, and on the other hand, in the very next sentence, it says it should be a democratic government … that rights of freedom of religion are preserved for non-Muslims, that free expression is an inviolable right, that equality exists for men and for women, and that Afghanistan is committed to observing the international conventions to which it is a signatory, which includes conventions guaranteeing equality for all persons. It is in many ways a progressive constitution, and it is also simultaneously one that is deeply Islamic.

He added, however, that "The devil will be in the details … we will find out later whether it works."[347] Salim Mansur argued that "the problem is that Afghanistan has been a part of the world we used to call a buffer state, where the great game was played. This society is not going to change according to the expectation we in the West have, in a matter of a few months or a few years, into a Jeffersonian democracy. We need to have a sense of patient expectation, given how history evolves. I have no illusion that it will take time and commitment. The question is whether we have the time and the commitment."[348]

South Asia is the scene of many long-standing conflicts, including a decades-long civil war in Sri Lanka; the parties to that war, however, are currently engaged in peace talks that will hopefully achieve a political solution, probably based on federalism. The most deep-rooted security challenge in South Asia — and the most dangerous, both in terms of actual and millions of potential deaths — is the rivalry between India and Pakistan, which has lasted for more than half a century and resulted in three full-scale wars and a nuclear standoff. The source of this tension was Britain's agreement as it withdrew in 1947 to partition the subcontinent into Hindu-dominated but nominally secular India and Muslim (east and west) Pakistan, in order to provide a homeland where Muslims could live and worship freely. The aftermath of partition saw severe rioting and population movement that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands in both India and Pakistan. The fate of the former autonomous princely state of Kashmir was disputed at the time of partition in August 1947, and activists argued that its Muslim majority should have the same right to a Muslim homeland as those living in the new Pakistan. The (Hindu) ruler of Kashmir finally decide to join India in October 1947; this decision led to the first Indo-Pakistani war, which ended with India controlling two thirds of Kashmir and Pakistan one third, and a United Nations recommendation for a referendum on Kashmir that has never been held. A second war over Kashmir followed in 1965, and when civil war broke out in Pakistan in 1971, India invaded East Pakistan to support the establishment of an independent state of Bangladesh.

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[346] See Scott Gilmore, "Canadian Foreign Policy and Afghanistan," 11th Annual Canadian Consortium on Asia Pacific Security (CANCAPS) Conference, December 6, 2003, Calgary, Alberta. Beyond the importance of Afghanistan itself, Mr Gilmore, a DFAIT official, also noted that given Canada's "unprecedented" and "3D" response, "Afghanistan offers us an important lesson and the implications are significant for Canada's response to similar crises in the future."

[347] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 57 (1235).

[348] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (1010).

By 1974, India had developed the capacity for what it termed a "peaceful nuclear explosion" — at least partly through the misuse of Canadian nuclear technology. While India's nuclear capability was undoubtedly developed in response to China, the militarily weaker Pakistan felt obliged to follow it in the development of nuclear weapons. Until recently, Pakistan has also continued to support Kashmiri extremists in their terrorist campaign against India, which included an attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001. General Hamid Gul, an admitted Islamist and former head of Pakistan's main intelligence agency, Inter Service Intelligence, was quoted recently as saying, "if they encourage the Kashmiris it's understandable. The Kashmiri people have risen up in accordance with the UN Charter, and it is the national purpose of Pakistan to help liberate them. India is so huge, so large, so ruthless. If the jihadis go out and contain India, tying down their army on their own soil, for a legitimate cause, why should we not support them?"[349] Noah Feldman has argued that the conflict over Kashmir has become "a nearly mythical grudge match where both sides have nuclear weapons."[350] Ann Thomson argued that "there are certain keystone issues that, without solution, perpetuate a wider sense of injustice and conflict in Muslim communities. The Israeli-Palestinian issue is clearly one for Muslims worldwide. The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan is another."[351]

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[349] See William Dalrymple, "Murder in Karachi," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. 50, No. 19, December 4, 2003.

[350] Feldman, p. 128. For an interesting series of reports on the issue of Kashmir as seen from both India and Pakistan, see the International Crisis Group, *Kashmir: The View From Islamabad*, Asia Report No. 68, December 4, 2003, *Kashmir: The View From New Delhi*, Asia Report No. 69, December 4, 2003, and *Kashmir: Learning From the Past*, Asia Report No. 70, 4 December 2003.

[351] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1115).

The rivalry between India and Pakistan was made all the more dangerous by the fact that both countries had long been assumed to possess nuclear weapons, although they had never admitted this. In 1998, India tested nuclear weapons, and Pakistan quickly followed. Canada and the rest of the international community strongly condemned both countries for these tests, and the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1172 calling on them to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) without delay and without conditions. This has not happened, and in September 2003, Canada told a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency that it

> … continues to be concerned that India, Israel and Pakistan … remain outside the NPT, the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We urge these countries to join the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States, unconditionally and without delay. This is an essential requirement for the continued sustainability of the multilateral nuclear non-proliferation regime and a basic requirement of full membership in the international community. We are disappointed that there has been no progress by any of these countries toward this objective.[352]

Canada has also urged India and Pakistan to restrain their testing of ballistic missiles.

Tensions between the two countries reached a high point in 2002, and the immediate crises were diffused only with the help of intense international diplomacy. Tensions had decreased significantly by the time of the Committee's visit to South Asia in October 2003, however, and the following months saw a welcome and long-awaited breakthrough. In January 2004, the leaders of India and Pakistan met on the sidelines at a summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and issued a statement pledging to pursue a composite dialogue on Kashmir and other key issues that divide them.

Before these recent developments, Ann Thomson had argued that "I think Kashmir is an area where Canada really could do something. There is a willingness there to see Canada in its honest broker role. I think both sides would be willing to see Canada in a position where it was promoting dialogue. The Parliamentarians going to the area need to be thinking about whether or not self-determination is realistic for Kashmir and what, if any, role Canada might want to play."[353] Whether or not this is the case, the Canadian government welcomed the recent breakthrough, and the Committee believes it should offer its support to the ongoing process as appropriate.

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[352] "Canadian Statement," 47th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, September 17, 2003.

[353] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1255).

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Government of Canada should encourage India and Pakistan to continue their composite talks, and should stand ready with the rest of the international community to contribute to the resolution of long-standing disputes, particularly that over Kashmir, as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Government of Canada should continue to urge the governments of Pakistan and India to work together to reduce the risk of nuclear escalation in South Asia and, given recent revelations, redouble their efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation.

Pursuing Development and Democratization

In addition to traditional security challenges, Ann Thomson of South Asia Partnership Canada pointed out that the underlying challenges in South Asia remain those of development and democratization. Despite significant economic growth in India over the last decade, tremendous numbers of people there and in countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh remain poor, illiterate and therefore vulnerable to exploitation. Pakistan presents unique challenges in terms of democratization. Even countries that have had more success in this area, however, such as Bangladesh, which Noah Feldman argues is "a remarkably free democracy,"[354] suffer from weak institutions and corruption, which create further obstacles to building a strong democratic and human rights culture. Combined with poverty and inadequate education, the lack of such a culture makes the residents of the region, particularly the large youth populations, vulnerable to appeals to extremism. There have been important development successes in South Asia over the years: famine has been eliminated and life expectancy and literacy have risen. Nonetheless, countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan remain among the poorest in the world, and much remains to be done, particularly in the area of education.

Given a lack of adequate public education, parents in Pakistan and elsewhere often have no choice but to send children to *madrassas* (free religious schools). As Muslim Indian journalist M.J. Akbar argued before the Committee, "... the *madrassa* has a long history and an honourable history, which I think you need to recognize. At what point did the *madrassa* become a problem rather than a solution? The *madrassa* is the world's largest NGO, and there should really be consciousness of that fact. The poorest of the Muslims today who do not get state protection, who do not get state welfare, or who do not have a home or an education or food are picked up by the *madrassas*." He added that in the early 1980s he had had interviewed an extremist leader in Kashmir, who said

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[354] Feldman, p. 114.

> " … you Indians think you've solved the problem of Kashmir. But do you know something? Your children are no longer going to government schools." Now, I did not quite understand the meaning of that. He said, "Your children have stopped because the government school structure has decayed. The poorer children used to go to government schools for the midday meal or to use the bathroom, which they did not have at home. But now they're coming to my *madrassas*. When I send them out in 15 years, do you think they will be loyal to your India?" He was very clear, and I quoted him on it.[355]

The majority of *madrassas* provide a necessary service in meeting the daily physical needs of students, and the number that preach extremism is small; and yet, their curricula rarely leave students prepared for anything but a religious position. Few provide an education that truly prepares youth for the future.

Ann Thomson of South Asia Partnership Canada presented the Committee with an overview of the grassroots work carried out by this coalition of 24 Canadian organizations and their partners in the region, which is focused on governance and democracy, peace and security, and sustainable livelihoods. Once again, she argued the need to look to and support civil society. She noted that:

> …in South Asia, we see that Muslims in both majority and minority communities represent the same broad range of attitudes and practices that we have in Canada and in other parts of the world. Our experience shows that the great majority of people want to live peaceful, productive lives in harmony with others in their communities, regardless of religion and other differences. Our partners and colleagues tell us and demonstrate for us that the great mass of Muslims want to be able to practise their own religion, want others to respect it, and are perfectly ready to respect others. Religious differences themselves are not the issue. Poverty, disparities in living standards, unfair treatment before the law, and lack of access to services and opportunity are the issues that give rise to conflict.

She added that "since the majority of Muslims live in the developing world in conditions of poverty, improving their livelihoods and reducing poverty is critical to building more just and equitable societies. In particular, reducing inequalities between these nations and the affluent Western world is an important means of improving relations and limiting the conditions that create support for desperate extremism such as international terrorism."[356]

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[355] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1230).

[356] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1115-25).

Strengthening Canada's Role

Canada has positive relations and a long history of engagement with all the countries in South Asia, beginning with the Commonwealth connection and continuing through development cooperation going back to the early 1950s. When asked the extent to which Muslim populations distinguished between Canada and "the West," Gwynne Dyer argued that the distinction would be strongest in the subcontinent. The Committee found this to be true: almost all witnesses made a clear distinction between Canadian policies and those of other Western nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom, particularly following the invasion of Iraq.

No outside country has been able to resolve the security problems in South Asia. However, there has been more success in terms of development. Ann Thomson told the Committee that "during eight years of living and working in Bangladesh and Indonesia, and many more travelling through South Asia, I saw successes ... repeated over and over, even in the midst of conflict. Canadian assistance lies behind each of these stories ... "[357] She added that:

> We should focus in our development cooperation abroad on eliminating poverty, improving livelihoods and social conditions, supporting gender equality, and encouraging democratic practices. Important to all of this is strengthening civil society in other countries and building the capacity of organizations, institutions, community groups, associations, and networks to bring change from within ...[358]

Many witnesses argued the need to support education in South Asia and elsewhere. M.J. Akbar argued before the Committee that:

> I would actually offer a radical thought: why don't you give ... aid to the *madrassas*? At the moment the *madrassas* are being funded only from one source, and that source is determining the curriculum. If somebody actually made computers compulsory in *madrassas*, you would see a dramatic impact inside. You cannot hope to remove them, but you can hope to change them. Just put computers in them. Those children deserve an education. You cannot deny them the right to an education. But change their education and turn them into responsible citizens.[359]

In addition to development, witnesses in the region called for the types of policies outlined in Part II, ranging from academic and other dialogue to support for education and increased student and other exchanges. Participants at the September 2003 conference on Canada and Islam in Asia in the 21st Century argued that "Regional and rural education programs are essential to the advancement of many Muslim countries. Canada can be instrumental in the development of such programs." One conference participant, Dr. Fazli Ilhai of the Organization of the Islamic Conference's Islamic Institute of Technology in Bangladesh, added that "in this age of privatization, government funding for development of educational infrastructure is not enough. We should not discourage private participation in the development of communities by providing educational opportunities but proper, healthy, transparent government regulations must be in place."[360]

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[357] Ibid. (1120).

[358] Ibid. (1125).

[359] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1255).

Overall, despite her organization's focus on South Asia, Ann Thomson stressed a global theme:

> Canada will enhance its relations with Muslims across the globe by supporting their efforts to address fundamental concerns: clean water; health services; good education; women's equality; safe jobs; peace and security; and so many more. By being a helpful partner to Muslims across the world, by providing a voice to those who would not otherwise be heard, and by building a relationship of respect rather than suspicion, Canada will improve dialogue, build trust, and alleviate the poverty that is a major barrier to sustainable and tolerant societies.[361]

Pakistan

> *Pakistan was conceived specifically as a state for Muslims, and also as a democracy; the first and only state of its kind … Pakistan is unique in the Muslim world in many ways: in its problems, its importance, and its potential promise …*[362]
>
> Noah Feldman

> *The remarkable thing about Pakistan is that its people don't stop demanding democracy even though their experiences of it have been uniformly disappointing. Despite the country's overweening military and its desperate poverty, despite the bitter ethnic rivalries and the fear of India that the generals exploit so well, military rulers never manage to resist that demand for very long. In other places military strongmen may stay in power for twenty-five or thirty years — Mubarak in Egypt, Assad in Syria, Suharto in Indonesia — but no Pakistani military dictator has made it much past ten.*[363]
>
> Gwynne Dyer

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[360] "Canada and Islam in Asia in the 21st Century: A Narrative Report." September 24-26, 2003, p. 7-8.

[361] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1125).

[362] Feldman, p. 129.

[363] Gwynne Dyer, "Pakistan: The Persistence of Democracy," October 8, 2002, article available at http://www.gwynnedyer.net.

Pakistan faces a staggering array of related challenges, which include chronic and increasing poverty, lack of democracy, weak institutions, corruption, and — perhaps inevitably given the preceding — extremism. A key problem in Pakistan also remains the power of the military in society; one interlocutor in South Asia repeated an old joke that while countries usually have an army, in Pakistan an army has a country. The President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, seized power in 1999 in a popular and bloodless coup that was immediately condemned by the international community, including Canada. The Commonwealth promptly suspended Pakistan from its councils and sent a delegation of foreign ministers to that country, led by then-Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy. Mr. Axworthy later wrote that:

> Looking back, I wish there had been more time, or perhaps inclination, to pick up on the signs and portents in Pakistan. Here was a society under stress: extremes of poverty and wealth in a region of instability, drought and intrigue; an overburdening debt; huge outlays for the military; miniscule expenditures for education or health; Islamic extremism on the rise, infiltrating the army and intelligence service; a dangerous border conflict with India made all the more treacherous by a nuclear arms race. Offering advice and registering admonishment on a military takeover was too narrow an approach. [The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group] should have discussed a broad plan of action with the Pakistanis.[364]

General Musharraf's decision to agree to U.S. demands and join the war on terror in September 2001 made Pakistan a key regional ally of the United States and other Western governments. This resulted in increased financial assistance and the removal of many of the sanctions that had been placed on the country following its nuclear tests in 1998.

In his meeting with Parliamentarians in Ottawa in September 2003, President Musharraf stated that:

> Pakistan is totally committed to fighting terrorism in all its dimensions anywhere in the world. I know that there are aspersions being cast on Pakistan, especially on our western borders, that maybe we are dragging our feet. Maybe we lack that interest. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Pakistan is fighting terrorism in three dimensions, Al Qaeda, Taliban, and sectarian and religious extremism. While fighting Al Qaeda and Taliban is in the short-term context, in the longer-term context, it is fighting religious extremism ... we are fighting terrorism in Pakistan's own interest because it has a fallout in our cities and towns, therefore, there is no ground to even imagine that Pakistan will drag its feet, because we are doing something in our own interest.

He added that the current security challenge was a "tactical" one of coordinating sophisticated intelligence and quick response forces to attack small groups of Taliban and other extremists hiding in the mountainous terrain of Pakistan's tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. As long as this continued, he believed time was on Pakistan's side, and that a more serious "strategic" threat posed by a combination of Taliban, al-Qaeda and warlord forces would not emerge.

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[364] Lloyd Axworthy, *Navigating a New World: Canada's Global Future*, Alfred A. Knopf Canada, Toronto, 2003, p. 230.

At the same time, however, an increasing number of observers argue that Pakistan is at best a reluctant ally in the war on terror, and the source of many of the security problems in South Asia rather than their solution. One American author has recently written, for example, that "At the heart of the region's disorder is Pakistan, whose rise arguably constitutes the most grievous failure of Britain's colonial unravelling. Pakistan is the archetypal imagined community, an offspring of precipitate partition. Its frontiers are porous, its polyglot population exceptionally diverse. Its chief claim to unity is Islam, on which its authoritarian rulers have relied, inordinately. This has contributed to three wars and a nuclear confrontation with India, chiefly arising from an unresolved dispute over Kashmir, as well as the caesarean birth of Bangladesh in 1971."[365] Similarly, when asked about fundamentalism in Afghanistan, Salim Mansur replied in this way:

> The issue is that the neighbouring country of Afghanistan, Pakistan, with a population of over 150 million people, has become entirely a Talibanized society, and this Talibanized society, which emerged from interaction with Afghanistan over a period of 20-25 years in a war against the Soviet Union and subsequently in the internal war, is now feeding into the process. Are we going to be willing to open up the discussion and talk about Pakistan? Are we willing to talk about all the various ways this process has been incubated and has spread its tentacles? Are we willing to consider how dangerous the situation is, when a Talibanized society like Pakistan is now being seen as a front-line state of the United States to deal with the problem of fundamentalism, when the country itself is the incubator of fundamentalism? And this is now a nuclearized country, which is going to divert its attention towards Kashmir, as it has been doing, to spark, possibly, a regional war that could be totally catastrophic.[366]

There is much truth in these observations. Yet Committee members who visited Pakistan found a much more nuanced country, although one facing tremendous governance and development challenges that Canada and other nations can, and indeed must, help address both in their own interest and in that of millions of South Asians.

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[365] Karl E. Meyer, *The Dust of Empire: The Race for Mastery in the Asian Heartland*, Public Affairs Books, New York, 2003, p. 88.

[366] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (1010).

The Role of Islam in Pakistan

Complicating the search for solutions to Pakistan's multiple governance, development and security problems is a long-standing debate between radicals and modernists over the role of Islam in the state. In August 1947, the year of Pakistan's creation, its founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah told the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan that "You are free: you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or cast and creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the State ... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State."[367]

Yet, as British journalist Owen Bennett Jones argued in a highly regarded recent study of Pakistan:

> Ever since its creation, Pakistan has grappled with the issue of what role Islam should play in the state. When he called for the establishment of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah advanced the two-nation theory. Muslims and Hindus, he argued, constituted two nations that could never live together. A strict interpretation of the two-nation theory has led some Pakistanis to conclude that the country was always intended to be an Islamic state. But others — and in my opinion the majority — have a different view. They believe that Jinnah was trying to create a country in which Muslims could live in safety, free from Hindu dominance. Most Pakistanis do not want to live in a theocracy: they want their country to be moderate, modern, tolerant and stable.
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> During the 1980s this vision of Pakistan received a substantial setback. General Zia ul Haq — perhaps the only one of Pakistan's four military rulers to deserve the epithet "dictator" — consistently advanced the cause of radical Islam. The effects of Zia's Islamisation campaign are still being felt today. The militant groups remain well-organised, well-armed and well-financed. The current military ruler, General Musharraf, is trying to dismantle Zia's legacy. His attempt to downplay the role of religion in the state directly challenges the interests of well-entrenched and highly motivated elements of Pakistani society. His success or failure ... will have far-reaching implications not only for Pakistan but also the region and the international security system as a whole.[368]

Witnesses in Ottawa, and the visit of Committee members to Pakistan, confirmed this analysis. Uner Turgay told Committee members that:

> In Pakistan legal Islamization in the years immediately following Zia ul-Haq's period — his death, actually — took root and illustrates the political importance of Islam. The country is still committed to some sort of legal and

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[367] Cited in Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2002, p. 12.

[368] Ibid., p. xv.

> social, and even, to a degree, political, Islamization. It appears that many of the debates in Pakistan concern the content and method of Islamization, not any meaningful form of return to secularization. The results of the most recent elections clearly show that Islam is very much in politics in Pakistan, and it will continue to dominate all national issues. To a number of intellectuals the success of the religious group Muttahida Majlis-E-Amal, MMA, a loose coalition of Muslim religious parties of all shades, which, with 60 seats, emerged as the third largest political force in the Parliament, was not a surprise.[369]

While agreeing that few in Pakistan argue for secularization, Noah Feldman underlines that the key challenge remains the establishment of democracy. In his words, "Pakistan can … become a leader in the movement toward Islamic democracy, if only it can move in the direction of democracy itself. The challenge for Pakistan is not so much to make democracy and Islam coexist; after years of discussion, Pakistanis mostly agree that these ideas can and should work together. The impediment to Islamic democracy is not Islam, but anti-democratic forces in Pakistani government and society. The challenge for Pakistan is to make the transition to democracy work this time."[370]

Democratization and Good Governance

The Committee's meetings in Pakistan focused largely on democratization, human rights and development issues. These meetings exposed members to a vibrant civil society which over decades has proven more reliable than Pakistani governments, and a press which is careful, but nevertheless open and critical. Canadian commentator Gwynne Dyer has argued that "Pakistan has been ruled by generals for about half the time since its creation in 1947, but the generals always have a problem with legitimacy. No matter how hard they try, they cannot eradicate the assumption among ordinary Pakistanis that democracy is the normal state of affairs. Always, in the end, the country tries democracy again — even though it has been almost uniquely ill-served by its civilian political leaders."[371] Overall, while politicians from across the political spectrum and civil society representatives were critical of many aspects of the current situation in Pakistan, they were not pessimistic about the future, particularly if Canada and other developed countries helped Pakistan to finally achieve sustainable democracy and address its development and other challenges.

In Ottawa, President Musharraf told Parliamentarians that while his seizure of power may not have been democratic, his government has taken key steps to create sustainable democracy in Pakistan, including decentralization, empowerment of women — including the establishment of quotas to increase their representation in Parliament — and the poor, and checks and balances on the executive. He added, "Please see democracy through Pakistani eyes ... There is no set formula for democracy. It has to be tailored in accordance with local environments, and that is exactly what we have done. We have tailored democracy to our local environment and we think genuinely that this is the pattern which is sustainable. Democracy will not be derailed now."

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[369] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1545).

[370] Feldman, p. 129.

[371] Dyer, (2002).

In fact, General Musharraf has largely followed the letter of the Supreme Court ruling which set a deadline of October 2002 for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. He began with generally free and fair local elections. These were followed by a widely condemned national referendum extending his rule. Carefully managed national elections followed in October 2002. Finally, in December 2003, after long negotiations, President Musharraf agreed to give up the post of chief of army staff by the end of 2004 in exchange for an extension of his presidency until 2007, thereby securing Parliamentary approval of a series of important constitutional changes contained in the Legal Framework Order (LFO). Yet while General Musharraf has demonstrated as much, if not more, vision than all of his military or civilian predecessors, most observers would probably agree that his actions have still not demonstrated truly democratic governance. Further, by ensuring that the two mainstream opposition political parties remained sidelined even as Pakistan took action against the Taliban and, to a lesser extent, other Islamic radicals — a move that increased anti-U.S. and anti-Musharraf sentiment — President Musharraf directly or indirectly allowed the six-party religious coalition Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) to gain an unprecedented number of votes in October 2002. As a result of those elections, the MMA now governs one of Pakistan's provinces and participates in a coalition government in another.

In a critical January 2004 report, the International Crisis Group argued that despite his rhetoric, General Musharraf has so far failed to adequately address extremism in Pakistan. It argued that:

> Musharraf's failure owes less to the difficulty of implementing reforms than to the military government's own unwillingness. Indeed, he is following the pattern of the country's previous military rulers in co-opting religious extremists to support his government's agenda and to neutralise his secular political opposition. Far from combating extremism, the military government has promoted it through its electoral policies and its failure to implement effective reform. Whatever measures have so far been taken against extremism have been largely cosmetic, to ease international pressure.[372]
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> ... Musharraf's agreement with the MMA on the Seventeenth Amendment in late December 2003, which gives constitutional cover to the LFO, has formalized the military's alliance with the mullahs. Facing the concerted

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[372] *Unfulfilled Promises: Pakistan's Failure to Tackle Extremism*, International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 73, Islamabad/ Brussels, January 16, 2004, p. *ii*.

> opposition of all major secular, moderate political parties, Musharraf has become even more dependent on the mullahs for regime survival.[373]

In terms of human rights, the Government of Pakistan has signed some important international conventions and taken some actions to address the most flagrant abuses of human rights. Unfortunately, overall human rights — particularly in the case of women and minorities — are still not respected in Pakistan. The government has also not addressed a number of discriminatory laws, and has not yet taken strong enough action against such illegal practices such as "honour killings" and "stove burnings," which are often linked to Islam in the West, but are in fact motivated more by tribal and cultural customs.

Beyond democratization and governance, the development challenges facing Pakistan are staggering. Overall, Pakistan's human development indicators are well below acceptable standards for countries at a similar level of development, and some are even below those of poorer neighbours in South Asia. After declining before 1990, poverty has since increased alarmingly in Pakistan from 20% to 33%, and is compounded by a high level of illiteracy. Government expenditure for development purposes remains inadequate. Education remains a key concern, since lack of public education increases reliance on the *madrassa* system, which the government has not yet moved to effectively regulate — as many as 1.5 million students attend unregulated *madrassas* — despite a commitment more than two years ago to do so. As the International Crisis Group has noted, "the government said it would:

> - register all *madrassas* so that it had a clear idea of which groups were running which schools;
> - regulate the curriculum so that all *madrassas* would adopt a government curriculum by the end of 2002;
> - stop the use of *madrassas* and mosques as centres for the spread of politically and religious inflammatory statements and publications; and
> - establish model *madrassas* that would provide modern, useful education and not promote extremism".[374]

CIDA's Vice-President for Asia, Hau Sing Tse, told members that while General Musharraf has attempted to carry out reforms, including decentralization, "... Pakistan possesses very depressing social indicators. It exhibits the characteristics of a very fragile state." He continued:

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[373] Ibid., p. 2.

[374] *Unfulfilled Promises*, p. *i*.

> We, along with the other donors, have taken some risks to provide assistance to the decentralization initiative. We're currently focusing on working with the decentralization to the local government and helping the local capacity exercise their authority and decision-making. We are focusing on assisting delivery of education and health services at the local level. Finally, given the dire straits of affairs related to women, we're working at bettering the lives of women, particularly among the rural poor.[375]

Total Canadian official development assistance to Pakistan in 2001-2002 was $62.5 million, of which $44.8 million Canada's imputed share of spending by international financial institutions, the UN and the Commonwealth, $17 million was in the form of bilateral assistance, and $1 million was provided to NGOs and other partners working in Pakistan.

Witness Views in Pakistan

As noted above, the Committee's meetings with officials, Parliamentarians from across the political spectrum and a range of NGO voices convinced it that democratization remains the key to future stability and prosperity in Pakistan. A number of witnesses were critical of progress toward democracy, expressing doubts about the willingness of either General Musharraf or the army to give up power, and arguing that the government of Pakistan presents one face to the West, and another in the country.

In terms of development, Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President of the Aga Khan University, told members that there was no single holy grail of development, and the question always is what motivating factors can help change attitudes and outlooks. He argued that Pakistan was an interesting front-line of many cultures, ethnicities and religions, and is also a place of great moderation, with grassroots that want development activities. He added that Pakistan had made real progress on issues such as infant mortality, and that in development, "the more you roll, the faster you roll." Mr. Akbar Ali Pesnani, the President of the Ismaili Council for Pakistan, argued that much of the growing poverty in Pakistan was due to illiteracy and a lack of education. He added that, since people must be able to understand, a lack of literacy renders democracy for the sake of democracy useless.

Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, who had been given cabinet rank by President Musharraf while chairing a Steering Committee on Higher Education for public university reform, argued that the biggest challenge Pakistan faced was education. He said there were over 10,000 *madrassas* in Pakistan, and while poor families need these to provide food and shelter as well as religious education, *madrassas* were not intended to be myopic, and the government was now attempting to reform their curricula. Dr. Mahmood Ghazi, a former Minister of Religious Affairs and currently Vice-President of Academics at Islamabad Islamic University, made a similar argument on the need for education. As minister he had warned President Musharraf that there were no shortcuts to reforming *madrassas*.

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[375] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1105).

Although Pakistan is increasing its education budget, it will remain inadequate for decades. Dr. Ghazi suggested that Canada and others could help with money, scholarships or assistance in kind, especially at higher levels of education where people were mature enough to understand concepts such as human rights. He added, however, that since most Pakistani students who go abroad to study never return, returning to Pakistan should be a requirement for the completion of degrees, in order to stem this "brain drain." Other civil society representatives agreed that assistance could be most usefully focused on education. One interlocutor suggested that education-specific assistance could support NGOs and foundations working on education in the voluntary and private sectors. One Parliamentarian added that this could include assistance with teachers and vocational skills.

Directions for Canadian Policy

As noted above, Canada and Pakistan have a long history of relations that include Commonwealth links and development assistance since the 1950s. Following Pakistan's decision to join the war on terror, Canada eased the sanctions imposed on Pakistan following its nuclear tests — except for those on sanctions on sales of military equipment — and has since pursued a policy of "constructive engagement," designed to encourage and support democratic and other necessary reforms. Given Pakistan's development challenges, Canada offered the conversion (swap) of $448 million in outstanding loans into increased education spending by the Government of Pakistan. In Ottawa, President Musharraf told parliamentarians that "the people of Pakistan can never forget this gesture because Canada was the first country to allow this debt to education swap." Given the importance of this initiative, detailed negotiations and due diligence continue to ensure that this money will directly improve education in Pakistan. At the same time, while thanking Canada for past assistance and encouraging future cooperation, Mr. Salim Saifullah Khan, Secretary-General of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (unified) raised the issue of the arrest of some 19 Pakistanis in Canada in the fall of 2003. While a number of these people had committed immigration offences, the Canadian government had portrayed the arrests as related to terrorism, which he argued was proof of undue harassment and intimidation, particularly given that Pakistan was a front-line state in the war on terror.

Overall, the Committee believes that while the Government's constructive engagement approach remains appropriate, given the importance of Pakistan and the scale of its challenges, Canada could play a stronger role.

RECOMMENDATION 24

The Government of Canada should continue to insist on the restoration and strengthening of democracy in Pakistan, as well as greater respect for human rights and faster action on reducing poverty and meeting other development challenges, and should continue to pursue these goals through a policy of constructive engagement.

RECOMMENDATION 25

Given the critical importance of increasing access to adequate and inclusive education in Pakistan, the Government of Canada should apply stringent conditions to ensure that its debt for education swap results in tangible progress toward this goal; increase scholarships and other forms of academic exchanges with that country; and encourage the Government of Pakistan to proceed with its commitment to register all *madrassas* and regulate their curricula.

India

> *India's glory — the regular, peaceful and democratic transfer of power by parties ruling a poor country of more than a billion people — is not without its dangers. One is that in a calendar crowded by state and national elections, painful reform, however necessary, is deferred in order not to upset potential voters. Another is that some politicians are tempted to stoop to crude populism, including the stoking of communal tensions. In 2004, the year of a general election, India is at risk on both counts.*[376]

Re-engaging With India

India is unique in many respects: it is the world's second-most populous country, with over 1 billion people, 33% of whom are under the age of 15. It is also the world's most populous democracy. A decade of strong economic growth has made India the world's 11th-largest economy — 4th-largest at purchasing power parity. India's information technology sector and certain other industries are world leaders, and its scientists are now talking of sending a man into space. Yet at the same time, India still faces daunting social, economic and environmental challenges: 44% of its population lives on less than US$1 per day; rates of malnutrition and maternal mortality are high, as are birthrates; more than 4 million people are HIV-positive; and pollution threatens the health and livelihood of half the population.

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[376] Simon Long, "The Billion-Person Question," *The Economist, The World in 2004*, fall 2003, p. 71.

While over 80% of India's population is Hindu, some 12% is Muslim, which means a Muslim minority in India which could amount to 130-140 million people, one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. The Committee chose to visit India during its study both to see at first hand the home of the largest Muslim minority in the world, and to exchange views on broader security and development issues in South Asia and around the world. While much international attention has recently focused on the issue of Islamic fundamentalism, with the possible exception of Kashmir, the primary issue in India seems to be the rise of Hindu militancy over the past decade, and related implications both for India's Muslim community and for the country's principles of secularism and democracy.

Despite long-standing Commonwealth and other links, relations between India and Canada went into several years of deep freeze following the nuclear tests of 1998 and consequent Canadian sanctions. Canada announced a re-engagement with India in March 2001, and high-level visits by ministers have continued on both sides — including a visit to India by the Canadian Prime Minister just days after that of the Committee. (In fact, India has been designated one of Canada's four priority relationships beyond the G-8). Members of the Committee who visited India found all interlocutors there very willing to share their views and to help identify themes and suggestions for cooperation.

Preserving the Secular Model

India is often referred to as "the world's largest democracy." A key element of its democratic system over the decades has been secularism; founders such as Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized the importance of respect and tolerance for all religions and communities in the country's pluralistic society.[377] Yet despite constitutional guarantees and institutionalized affirmative action programs, unofficial discrimination against religious and other minorities has continued over the years, as have ethnic and inter-religious clashes. While the numbers of such clashes may be low in terms of India's huge population, they have had continuing, and, in fact, even growing, political implications. Moreover, according to senior Indian journalist Khushwant Singh, a Sikh who has been a lawyer, a diplomat in Canada and the United Kingdom and a member of Parliament, "Commissions of inquiry have stated in categorical terms that in all Hindu-Muslim riots after

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[377] *New Priorities in South Asia: U.S. Policy Toward India, Pakistan and Afghanistan*, Chairmen's Report of an Independent Task Force Co-sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations and the Asia Society, 2003, p. 32.

Independence, over seventy-five per cent of casualties — in terms of life and property — were Muslim."[378]

Over the past decade, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has replaced the Indian National Congress as India's governing party — albeit in a coalition — and the issue of communal relations has come to the fore. While Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is generally seen as relatively moderate within the BJP, others are less so, and have been widely accused of either encouraging chauvinism, or simply benefiting from it when it has been stoked by Hindu extremist groups. One such group is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS); it was an RSS militant that assassinated Mohandas Gandhi in 1948, later explaining at his trial that Gandhi's "constant and consistent pandering to the Muslims" had left him with no choice.[379] While some Muslims and others have also incited violence and chauvinism, Indian Muslims generally feel under siege as a minority in the country.

The issue of communal violence reached a head in December 1992, when Hindu extremists demolished a 15th-century mosque in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh state, claiming it had been constructed there after the destruction of an ancient temple built on the birthplace of the god Ram; they planned to construct another temple in its place. In the widespread violence that followed this incident, more than 3,000 people were killed across India, most of them Muslim. Violence flared again in 2002 in BJP-ruled Gujarat, at a time of heightened religious tensions, when Muslim fanatics attacked and burned a train carrying Hindus home from Ayodhya, killing 59 people; between 1,000 and 2,000 people, mainly Muslims, were killed by mobs as a result.[380] Ayodhya has remained a major issue in Indian politics. At the time of the Committee's visit a national election was imminent, and many feared that political parties would exploit this issue to attract support.

In Ottawa, Karim Karim told the Committee that "the kind of exploitation by political parties in Gujarat, for example, of the differences between Hindus, Muslims, and Christians is abhorrent. But this is what, unfortunately, democratic systems lead to from time to time. What is happening at the national level with the BJP is not completely admirable either."[381] Indian Muslims and human rights groups complained that while over 100 Muslims had been arrested for the initial attack on the train in Gujarat in 2002, no Hindus had been arrested in relation to the much larger attacks that followed. Both India's National Human Rights Commission and its Supreme Court agreed, ordering that the cases be revisited by the Central Bureau of Investigation rather than local police; and in January 2004, 12 people were arrested and charged with murder and rape.[382] This event demonstrates the key theme raised in the Committee's visit to India, namely that: strong democratic institutions are critically important both for governance in general and to reassure minorities that they will be protected, thereby discouraging extremism.

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[378] Khushwant Singh, *The End of India*, Penguin Books India, 2003, p. 90.

[379] Pankaj Mishra, "The Other Face of Fanaticism," *The New York Times Magazine*, February 2, 2003.

[380] The respected International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) claims that between 1,000 and 5,000 Muslims died. See International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey 2002/3*, Oxford University Press, London, May 2003, p. 206.

[381] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1250).

Addressing Development Challenges

Indians of all ethnic groups and religions face tremendous challenges. Yet Indian Muslims face even more than others: while some 35% of Hindus live below the poverty line, the comparable figure for Muslims is perhaps 50%. In terms of education, more than 50% of Muslims are illiterate, and a large number of Muslim children attend *madrassas* rather than (admittedly poor) public schools. Muslim women and girls suffer even more in numerous ways, and probably more for reasons of socio-economic status than religion. They are disadvantaged several times over: as women, as poor women and as members of a minority. Overall, Indian Muslim women have an illiteracy rate of perhaps 60%.

While it is important to recognize the different development challenges faced by different groups in India, Ann Thomson of South Asia Partnership Canada (SAP) pointed out that this need not lead to separate programs for assistance. She told members that:

> One of SAP Canada's members, the International Development and Relief Foundation, IDRF, is working in the Jharkand state of India to improve the living conditions of slum residents. In these neighbourhoods, Muslim and Hindu communities live side by side, faced by more or less the same problems. Poverty and its related problems are common to all the poor of the area, so the work must include everyone.
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> In three slums, IDRF, with its partners, is providing informal education to the children so that they can continue their study in the formal school systems. Women are organized into self-help groups that are saving on a regular basis to establish a revolving microcredit fund. Girls have access to vocational training and the resulting products are sold. The project is also providing the community with visiting nurses. Over three years, this project has improved girls' access to education, mobilized the communities, generated income, and improved health care. Leaders of this project are now showing interest in educating on a taboo subject in India: HIV and AIDS. By working together, this community has not only improved its living conditions, but has gained recognition and respect within society at large.[383]

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[382] See Sanjoy Majumder, "Gujarat and the Judges' Anger," BBC News UK Edition (Online), September 12, 2003; and "Arrests Over Gujurat Riots Case," BBC News UK Edition (Online), January 22, 2004.

[383] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1120).

For his part, Salim Mansur argued that "The most dramatic story in the Indian case has nothing to do with CIDA or with any other development organization around the world, it has to do with private enterprise and the development of information technology, south India becoming a silicon valley and now exporting manpower to Europe and to America. The success stories of third world economies that have taken off, Asian countries, parts of India, have little to do with CIDA or World Bank input going through."[334] Hau Sing Tse of CIDA spoke of the recent strong economic growth in India, pointing out that "Our current program supports economic reform, social development, and environmental management." He added that "the Indian government has recently announced its external aid policy, which directs smaller bilateral donors, like Canada and many others, to work with civil society only and not directly with the government."[335] Canada has therefore decided to discontinue its bilateral aid to India in 2005-2006, although multilateral and partnership programming will continue. At current levels, this would mean a drop from about $60 million annually to $30 million.

Witness Views in India

Witnesses in India presented a variety of opinions on the many governance, development and other challenges facing India and South Asia. They agreed overwhelmingly, however, that the key strength of the Indian system was its secular, democratic institutions.

Mr. Syed Shahabuddin, a former diplomat and politician, currently president of the non-political All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawrat and editor of *Mushawrat*, a journal about Muslims, thanked members for including India in the Committee's study. This was important, given both the size of India's Muslim minority and the fact that some 40% of the world's Muslims live as minorities. He argued that the biggest issue for Muslims is the freedom to maintain their religious identities, adding that they seek security, dignity, equal opportunity and non-discrimination. While the events in Gujarat were terrible, he argued that it could have been worse, and "it's still a fire we can put out." Journalist Saeed Naqvi argued that while there were still development challenges, the "Indian experiment" sees a large Muslim minority living harmoniously through democracy. While all seemed lost after the terrible riots in Gujarat, the order to reopen the cases meant that Indian democracy is triumphing. He argued that the world has a stake in the success of this secular democracy. By contrast, Pakistan would like to see this experiment fail, since in many ways its raison d'être is to be in opposition; if the situation in Kashmir were resolved, it would have to create another bone of contention.

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[334] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 31 (1045).

[335] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 50 (1105).

Veteran political commentator Ms. Neerja Chowdury argued that the Hindu/Muslim divide has more to do with the country's political process than with religion. Politics, including the use of religious symbols, is the problem in India, not religion. She believed that, unfortunately, the situation has become polarized between religious fundamentalists and secular fundamentalists, with no middle way left. What kept the country going is the health of its institutions, along with a free press and civil society. She added that the reason India cannot let Kashmir go is that this would mean accepting the idea that religious groups cannot live together. In her opinion, every nation that believes in multiculturalism has a stake in what happens in Kashmir, and an interest in finding a peaceful solution. (Noting that the United Nations had called for a referendum in Kashmir, Ms. Chowdury argued that free and fair elections held there in the fall of 2002 were effectively referenda.)

Mrs. Krishna Bose, Chair of the Lok Sabha Standing Committee on External Affairs, began the meeting with members of that committee and other Parliamentarians by welcoming the Committee's visit as part of the recent re-engagement between India and Canada. In response to questions, Indian Parliamentarians argued that they are conscious of their responsibility to protect minority rights. While there are aberrations, Indian politicians know that playing the "race card" is playing with fire.

Mr. Ram Madhav, the main spokesman of the RSS, told members that India has to progress within its own cultural context, which it calls broadly "Hindu," using this term in a non-religious sense. While the RSS is a voluntary organization not related to government, he admitted that many of its members belong to the governing BJP. Mr. Madhav stated that the RSS believed the events in Gujarat were an aberration, and that the group was involved in dialogue trying to find compromise, as well as contributing on social issues. Other witnesses, however, argued that the RSS had fascist leanings, and that the BJP was the political wing of a collection of cultural and religious groups that included the RSS. A Canadian MP told Mr. Madhav frankly that the RSS was seen as intolerant and a threat to minorities.

In terms of development issues, witnesses generally agreed that Muslims in India faced greater challenges in terms of poverty and education, and that improving education, particularly for Muslim girls, was a priority. Neerja Chowdury agreed that the status of Muslim women in India was not what it should be, and argued that, in her opinion, the biggest human rights issue is the education of Muslim girls. At the same time, she asserted that the leadership of the Muslim community was mostly to blame for this situation, since over the years that community had used its Muslim "vote banks" for other things. Dr. Abad Ahamad, Chair of the Aga Khan Foundation India, argued the need to focus on education and economic improvement, adding that the education of girls is key and skills development is important.

Other representatives of the Aga Khan Foundation India described the foundation's work with other donors and NGOs, adding that these were not exclusively Muslim. They pointed out that almost all infrastructure in India is government-owned, but that such services as electricity and water remain inadequate: not one city, including Delhi, has 24-hour water service. A very useful model could be public/private partnerships such as those that have been developed in Britain, where the private sector is contracted by the government to deliver services. Far from removing responsibility from government, this arrangement simply recognizes that governments cannot always effectively provide services — particularly in large countries. Such a model could also work in the area of education, with government retaining responsibility for teachers and curricula, but the private sector providing the infrastructure. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to persuade the Indian government to consider pursuing this type of model.

On the specific issues of the Muslim world and relations with Canada, Mr. Shahabuddin argued that civilizations do not "clash," but rather intermingle, as India shows. He argued that all Muslims, including those in India, are concerned with the situation in Palestine, which they see in terms of colonialism, military force, humanitarian concerns and double standards in international relations. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan praised Canadian multiculturalism, adding that "you are in the good book of Muslim countries." Dr. Zafarul-Islam Khan argued that Canada has a "clean slate" to provide a voice. Mr. Shahabuddin said Canada is admired by all in both the Muslim world and the broader developing world, given such aspects as its two official languages, freedom for religious minorities, and its independent foreign policy. In his opinion, Canada's relations with the Muslim world will depend on Canada's stand on Palestine, its treatment of its Muslim minority and its independence from the United States.

Mr. Naqvi criticized the "war on terrorism," arguing that, paradoxically, it "multiplies terrorism." In the case of South Asia, the United States needed the support of Pakistan, which according to Mr. Naqvi pretends to cooperate and goes on puncturing Indian harmony. He argued that Canada should help strengthen democracy in India, and make its independent voice heard on issues where Canada differs from the United States. He noted that the media were very important, pointing out that the BBC World Service gained prominence shortly after the end of the first Gulf War, and that al Jazeera had been created by some Arab journalists to provide their own slant at the time of the second intifada. He argued that Canada consider establishing a satellite media outlet — which was not as expensive as people believe — and also a lecture circuit whereby people from other countries could come to Canada and discuss such issues. Neerja Chowdury agreed that Canada is well placed to encourage dialogue, and that such mechanisms as international conferences and a speakers program would be helpful.

Directions for Canadian Policy

Overall, India has both regional and also global significance on many levels. While the country has done much to address its development and other challenges over the past decades, much remains to be done in the areas of development, relations with Pakistan and intercommunal relations.[386] Since Canada has decided to end bilateral development assistance in 2005-2006 at India's request, the Committee believes it is very important to ensure that adequate funds remain available to assist Indians of all religions and ethnic groups to meet the challenges they face. While the Committee would not presume to lecture Indians on democracy, it simply notes its agreement with those who argued that as a multi-ethnic and multicultural country, Canada has an ongoing interest in the success of the "Indian experiment" in secular democracy.

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Government of Canada should continue to pursue its current policy of re-engagement with India, and, where possible, support Indian government efforts to provide adequate education for the most disadvantaged groups in society. Canada should also support efforts to decrease intercommunal tensions.

Relations with Countries in Southeast Asia

> *The rise of political Islam represents a challenge to governments throughout Southeast Asia. While the idea of societal renewal or establishing a stronger moral base for societies — some long plagued by government corruption — are positive developments, radical Islam is not. Within the region, difficult developmental challenges and often-rigid political systems have helped fill the ranks of dissatisfied youth, workers, and intellectuals ... the critical question is how to find a new equilibrium in the post-September 11 world that allows a non-violent role for Islam.*[387]
>
> Scott B. MacDonald and Jonathan Lemco

> *The critical long-term issue in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia is whether a moderate or militant version of political Islam will prevail ...*[388]

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[386] A recent report by American experts has noted that "India, it is sometimes said, is like a giant ocean liner that steams ahead at a slow but steady and generally predictable pace and changes direction only very gradually." See *New Priorities in South Asia: U.S. Policy Toward India, Pakistan and Afghanistan*, (2003), p. 36.

[387] Scott B. MacDonald and Jonathan Lemco, "Political Islam in Southeast Asia," *Current History*, November 2002, p. 392.

[388] Angel M. Rabasa, "Political Islam in Southeast Asia: Moderates, Radicals and Terrorists," *Adelphi Papers* Vol. 358, Issue 1, July 2003, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 2003, p. 68.

The challenge for the West is to support the reconsolidation of viable democratic states in Southeast Asia ... and to forge stronger links with what has been called 'civil Islam,' the Muslim civil society groups that advocate moderation and modernity.[389]

Angel M. Rabasa

While the traditions of Islam in Southeast Asia are very tolerant, the global rise of political Islam over the past quarter-century, and particularly in the last several years since the Asian economic crash of the late 1990s and the war on terrorism, have influenced the mainstream political debates in many of the countries in the region, including both long-established democracies such as Malaysia and newer ones such as Indonesia. At the margins, they have also led a few extremists to commit terrorism.

The Committee's visits to Indonesia and Malaysia convinced members of the importance of this dynamic region, as well as the moderate traditions of Islam found there. It also allowed members to better understand the complexity of the internal debate now underway between Muslims there over the role of Islam as they pursue development and security and consolidate democracy, and its implications for the broader Muslim world and beyond.

Regional Overview

Southeast Asia is composed of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam — and Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor). In general, these countries share similarities such as the presence of Malay ancestry and culture, experience of colonization (except for Thailand), and a wide diversity in cultural makeup. While the region includes a number of major religions apart from Islam, it is home to more than 200 million Muslim citizens, who constitute majorities in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei, and minorities in Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia. From the perspective of relations between the West and the Muslim world, the importance of the region lies not only in the absolute size of its Muslim population, but the existence of important moderate Muslim majority countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

Southeast Asia saw impressive economic growth throughout the 1990s, which both increased its trade links with the world and allowed the states of the region to reduce poverty. The Asian economic crash of 1997-98 was difficult for all of these states, particularly Indonesia, both in terms of economic hardship and the exposure of governance and other problems that economic growth had masked. By 2004, most of the countries of the region had recovered from the economic crash. (In fact, Southeast Asia was the only region outside of North America to which Canadian exports increased in 2002.) The economies and living standards in the region range from high in trading nations such as Singapore and Malaysia, through states such as Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines which had grown well before the crash, to low in Burma, which remains politically and economically isolated under an oppressive military regime.

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[389] Ibid., p. 72.

In the fall of 2003, Yuen Pau Woo of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada argued that "Southeast Asia is going through its own identity crisis. Having largely shaken off the stigma of the Asian crisis, it now has to compete with China for the affection of global investors, while fending off unsavoury images of the sub-region as 'the second front in the war on terrorism.'" [390]

Democratization also continues to be a challenge. While the situation is worse in Burma, Vietnam remains a one-party Communist state where tolerance for dissent is low. The transition to democracy in Cambodia remains difficult. The Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia are considered democratic based on universal suffrage and a free press, yet all require stronger non-partisan institutions to guarantee the democratic process. Finally, while democratic, Singapore and Malaysia have dominant political parties which constrain the political process. In a welcome development, however, ASEAN states recently took an unprecedented step away from their traditional principle of non-interference in internal affairs by criticizing Burma for the detention of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Most of the states in Southeast Asia face problems of ethnic nationalism, which have resulted in communal conflicts and secessionist movements in several parts of Indonesia, as well as the Philippines and southern Thailand. As Amitav Acharya has noted, "Prior to September 11, 2001, the major security challenges facing Southeast Asia were intra-ASEAN disputes and domestic instability ... Since September 11, 2001, a new challenge, that of transnational terrorism, has come to dominate the security perceptions and agenda of Southeast Asian governments. Southeast Asia has been termed by some analysts as the 'second front' in the global war on terror." He added the qualification, however, that "There are important variations in the nature and objectives of terrorist groups in Southeast Asia." While some groups, such as the regional Jemaah Islamiyah ("Muslim Community") seek to establish a pan-Islamic state across the region and have links to al-Qaeda, others seek to punish ethnic rivals, challenge governments they believe are corrupt or undemocratic, or seek independence or autonomy. Overall, he added that:

> Terrorism in Southeast Asia is thus neither exclusively global nor exclusively local. It is both. It breeds from local causes, but draws sustenance from the outside. Issues like the Palestinian question and resentment against the

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[390] Yuen Pau Woo, in Amitav Acharya, "Southeast Asian Security After September 11," *Foreign Policy Dialogue Series 2003-8*, Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada, November 2003, p. 2.

> global dominance of the U.S. gives legitimacy to terrorist causes. Although many terrorist groups have religious roots, their motivations are ultimately political, their chief aim being to seize power in their respective states or in the region.[391]

The threat posed by international terrorism in Southeast Asia was brought home with the bombing of two nightclubs in Bali in October 2002 that killed 202 and injured 300 — many of whom were Australian tourists — and again in August 2003, when the bombing of the J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta killed 13 and injured 149 — mostly Indonesian workers. The countries of Southeast Asia have now committed themselves to increased intelligence and other cooperation in this area. According to a mid-2003 assessment by RAND analyst Angel Rabasa: "While collective action against terrorism faces formidable obstacles, including porous and poorly controlled borders, weaknesses in intelligence and law-enforcement institutions and, in some countries, a political reluctance to admit the gravity of the threat, enhanced intelligence-sharing has produced notable successes."[392]

Islam in Southeast Asia

Many Asian witnesses made observations similar to Rabasa's that "Islam was brought to Southeast Asia by Arab, Persian and Indian traders and spread largely through the conversion of elites; thus it developed under different conditions from other regions in the Muslim world, where the religion was established through Arab or Turkish conquest. In Southeast Asia, the continuity of elites under the new religious dispensation permitted the preservation of strong pre-Islamic elements." Rabasa makes the additional point that "Islam in Southeast Asia is not only uneven in its geographical contiguity, but also extraordinarily diverse internally." [393]

Despite this tradition of tolerance, as a result of global events ranging from the Iranian revolution and the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan through to the war on terrorism and perhaps even continued Saudi charitable funding, political Islam has increased its appeal in the region over the past two decades. In Ottawa, Uner Turgay told the Committee that:

> Islamists in South and Southeast Asia today ... are stronger than in any other period in recent history. In Malaysia Kota Baharu, the capital of Kelantan, is the epicentre of the Islamic movement and Malaysia's Islamic party, and it is gaining ground there. In Indonesia Vice-President HamzahHaz has several times expressed sympathy for the Islamists in that country. However, the vast diversity of the population in Southeast Asia, with

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[391] Acharya, p. 3-5.

[392] Rabasa, p. 66.

[393] Ibid., p. 13-14.

> its considerable economic power, no doubt acts as a controlling factor on Islamic fundamentalism.[394]

While the political debate between Muslims in the region is a domestic one, Rabasa argues that it can have implications for Western nations in two ways: either in the extreme cases where it results in international terrorism, or when Islamic extremists destabilize moderate regional governments.[395]

Directions for Canadian Policy

Given the importance of Islam in Asia and the pace of recent developments, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade commissioned Uner Turgay of McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies to carry out a research visit to a number of key countries in South and Southeast Asia in February and March 2003. Professor Turgay later argued before the Committee that:

> I think Canada is really at the crossroads, there are historic opportunities for Canada. It's the only English-speaking country right now that has respect in Southeast Asia among the Muslim countries. The pervasive presence of the United States, militarily, economically, very often politically, and not only presence, but at times control, is terribly resented by the Muslims in that part of the world. England's ready, rabid support for the United States is also very much resented in that part of the world. Australia is no longer viewed by the Indonesians, the Malaysians, or the Muslims in Thailand as an Asia-Pacific nation; it is viewed as the soldier of the West. Why? Because of its avid support for the U.S. policies in the Middle East, as well as, of course, their involvement — and rightly so in that regard — in the East Timor situation. They became the policeman of the West in that part of the world. Canada is the only English-speaking country they want to deal with, be it in education, be it in foreign aid, the Muslims in that part of the world.[396]

While not focused on relations with Muslim majority countries, Canadian diplomat Daryl Copeland has made a similar argument in urging greater engagement with the countries of Asia. In his words:

> … Canada has arrived at a strategic and perhaps even defining moment for advancing its pacific prospects. The decision to abstain from participating in the war in Iraq has bolstered Canadian credibility and legitimacy as an independent actor, and created a strategic opening. The widespread and intensifying antipathy directed at U.S. foreign policy, a development expressed with particular intensity in the Arab and Islamic worlds, has made more crucial than ever before the need to project a distinctly Canadian

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[394] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1545).

[395] Rabasa, p. 68.

[396] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1630).

> global identity. That window of possibility, however, will not remain open indefinitely.[397]

Apart from the fact that it houses the most populous Muslim state in the world in Indonesia, Southeast Asia will also play a key role in the ongoing dialogue over relations between countries of the Muslim world and the West as the home of influential and moderate Muslim majority states. In January 2004, journalist Christopher Hitchens argued of Indonesia that it "will help determine if we are undergoing a clash of civilizations or a clash about civilization — a clash where Muslims are on both sides, and where the uncivilized have already created the conditions for their own eclipse.[398] While true of Indonesia, the same can be said for Southeast Asia as a whole. By applying the mechanisms described above in Part II as appropriate, Canada can assist in strengthening both the relatively weak states in this region, and, more importantly, their civil societies, as they continue to address their many challenges and consolidate democracy.

Indonesia

> *The details of Indonesian politics and the transition from autocracy to democracy are so complex that anyone who has not spent a lifetime studying Indonesia should approach them with great caution. What can be said, however, is that Islamic organizations in Indonesia played an important role in bringing about greater democracy there, and that those Muslim parties continue to participate in Indonesian politics in mostly peaceful ways. Indonesia is now struggling to become a full-fledged democracy — and it is doing so with the participation of its 180 million Muslims. Indonesia is not an Islamic state, but it shows how a flexible Islam can participate in democratic development and democratic politics. It shows that a Muslim population may choose secular government after voting for Islamic parties. Distinctive as Indonesia and its Islam are, they disprove some myths about Islamic democracy and reveal that the possibilities are very broad.*[399]
>
> Noah Feldman

> *If Indonesia succeeds in consolidating a pluralistic democracy, it will be the world's third-largest and the largest in the Muslim world. Moderate political Islam as a force in a democratic pluralistic Indonesia could be an antidote to theocratic ideologies and concepts of an intolerant and exclusionist Islamic state.*[400]
>
> Angel Rabasa

Indonesia dominates Southeast Asia in many respects. Physically, it is composed of some 17,000 islands in the world's largest archipelago, which stretches the distance between Halifax and Vancouver. Demographically, it is home to over 300 ethnic and language groups and at least 230 million people, including the largest Muslim population in the world; as Uner Turgay pointed out to the Committee, Indonesia is larger than the three biggest countries in the Middle East, Turkey, Iran and Egypt, put together.

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[397] Copeland, p. 292.

[398] Christopher Hitchens, "A Prayer For Indonesia," *Vanity Fair*, January 2004, p. 53.

[399] Feldman, p. 118.

[400] Rabasa, p. 72.

As the first country Committee members visited in Asia during this study, the questions members posed in Indonesia focused more generally than elsewhere on exploring the nature of Islam in Asia. While acknowledging M. J. Akbar's caveat that such questions would, at least in part, elicit a "defensive" response,[401] the Committee's interaction with a range of Indonesian religious leaders and scholars, academics and others confirmed the tolerant nature of both the Indonesian and more general Southeast Asian, traditions of Islam. It also confirmed the many democratic and other challenges facing the country, and the desire of Indonesians to strengthen cooperation with Canada.

As Canadian Ambassador Randolph Mank told the Committee in Jakarta, Indonesia remains in many respects a frontier — a huge state with important national unity problems and a front-line state in the war on terrorism. Another key challenge is the continued combination of Islam with pluralist democracy. Indonesia is not formally an Islamic state, and mainstream Indonesian Islam is moderate, civil, tolerant, pluralist and secular. While Indonesians don't worry about their religion, they do worry about how it is characterized, and most are sensitive to any perceived linking of terrorism with all Muslims, or even all fundamentalists.

Consolidating Democracy

The past several years have seen tremendous change in Indonesia, particularly the end of decades of dictatorship and the beginning of a new democracy. Unfortunately, however, the country has seen important economic, governance, security and other challenges over that period as well, which have complicated the consolidation of that democracy. The Asian economic crash was particularly severe in Indonesia, which had seen strong economic growth for decades, and resulted in a doubling of poverty; 60% of the population now survives on less than $2 per day. As well, while the centralized Suharto regime had kept tight control over ethnic and other conflicts in this large and diverse country — or, at any rate, a monopoly on violence — the new openness saw increased ethnic and other violence in several areas, including in East Timor, where a vote by the residents in favour of independence led to a rampage by militia groups supported by the Indonesia military.

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[401] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1140).

Indonesians will vote in at least two and probably three national elections in 2004, which will, among other things, see the end of formal representation of the military and police in national and local legislatures. Unfortunately, however, as the International Crisis Group noted soberly in December 2003:

> Indonesians have been gradually losing much of their enthusiasm for democracy since the country's first post-authoritarian general election in June 1999 ... This does not mean that nothing has changed since the fall of Soeharto in 1998, however. Indonesians now enjoy extensive political freedoms — freedom to form political parties, freedom to organize, and freedom of the press. The extremely centralized authoritarian state has given way to a highly decentralized form of government. The military — while retaining a political presence — no longer overshadows all other political groups. But popular aspirations have been lowered drastically. There is no longer an expectation that free elections will lead to effective and accountable government. On the contrary, cynicism about the new political elite of elected politicians is almost universal.[402]

Democracy was a priority for the newly independent Indonesia in 1949 as its leaders planned to elect a constituent assembly to write a constitution and institute democratic government. A number of parties participated in free elections in 1955, including two parties representing traditionalist and modernist Muslims respectively.[403] This general division of Indonesian Muslims has continued over the decades in the form of two important socio-religious organizations. Over 40 million Indonesian Muslims currently belonging to the more rural and traditionalist Nahdlatatul Ulama (*NU*), which focuses on enlarging and protecting the welfare of the traditional Muslim community. At the same time, some 35 million belong to the more urban and modernist Muhammadiyah, which focuses primarily on education.

The achievement of democracy in Indonesia was unfortunately halted by decades of dictatorship, however, first under the secular socialist Sukarno (1958-65), then — following a terrible transition in which hundreds of thousands of suspected Communists and others died in state-sponsored violence — the secular anti-Communist Suharto (1967-1998). Toward the end of his reign, Suharto moved toward both secular and Islamist Muslims in an effort to preserve his support. By 1998, however, he had lost the support even of the military, and resigned following demonstrations and riots which took at least 500 lives. Suharto was replaced by his vice-president, and the first free elections in Indonesia for over 40 years were held in 1999. When the elections resulted in no majority, the People's Consultative Assembly chose well-known Muslim cleric Abdurrahman Wahid, the long-time leader of Nahdlatatul Ulama, as Indonesia's first freely elected President.

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[402] *Indonesia Backgrounder: A Guide to the 2004 Elections*, International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 71, December 18, 2003, p. 1.

[403] Feldman, p.116.

While a Muslim cleric, Wahid represented the tolerant traditions of Indonesian Islam, advocating a pluralistic state in Indonesia rather than an Islamic one. He had also visited Israel, and embraced the idea of relations between Israel and Muslim states.[404] Unfortunately, Wahid proved an ineffective President for health and other reasons, and was replaced less than two years later by Megawati Sukarnoputri — the daughter of Sukarno — who had received the greatest number of votes in 1999, and had been named Wahid's vice-president in a bid to ease tensions.

As in other Muslim countries, the past decade in Indonesia has seen an increase in both Islamic consciousness and political Islamism. M. J. Akbar argued before the Committee that this was a reversal of past practice, when Indonesia was a comfortable society, but " ... really had delinked itself." [405] In New York, Dr. Isobel Coleman of the Council on Foreign Relations pointed out that opinion polls in Indonesia showed a change on the issue of Palestine following the financial crash of the late 1990s, which many began to blame on financier "George Soros, the Jew." Some have also linked increased Islamism with continued Saudi charitable funding in Indonesia. According to Jamhari Makruf of Islamic State University, "They come to the poor districts here ... and say that they will build a mosque as long as they are allowed to appoint the imam. And then they try to impose Wahhabi indoctrination."[406] Nevertheless, witnesses in Indonesia and most others seem to agree with Angel Rabasa that "Indonesia has not proved to be fertile soil for Wahhabism."[407]

Politically, of course, the newly democratic government of Indonesia has become sensitive to the perceptions of voters, and the need to avoid taking actions which could be criticized as against Islam. Sidney Jones, Southeast Asia Director of the International Crisis Group, argued in August 2003 that in order to effectively address terrorism, Indonesian political leaders needed to publicly name Jemaah Islamiyah as the organization responsible for bombings in Bali and elsewhere that had killed hundreds. She added, "Officials are willing to condemn terror, violence and crime. But for fear of offending Muslim leaders, for whom the term Jemaah Islamiyah connotes the broader Muslim community, they are unwilling, with few exceptions, to acknowledge publicly the organization's existence."[408]

While unsuccessful, there have also been calls by some in Indonesia for the adoption of *sharia* law, or at least for a change to the first principle of the national philosophy of Pancasila — from "belief in the one and only God" to "belief in one God whose name is Allah."[409] At the same time, Uner Turgay told the Committee that while Indonesians expressed solidarity with Palestinians, "in the countries I visited, Indonesia, Malaysia, it is a concern, but it is not going to affect their policies regarding the West."[410] Overall, the effect of these trends has probably been less in Indonesia than in many other Muslim countries, both because of the more tolerant and syncretic tradition of Indonesian Islam, and the active opposition to fundamentalism and extremism on the part of major Muslim leaders.

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[404] Ibid., p. 117.

[405] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45, (1225).

[406] Hitchens, p.51.

[407] Rabasa, p. 16.

[408] Sidney Jones, "Indonesia Faces More Terror," *International Herald Tribune*, August 29, 2003.

As Angel Rabasa has noted, "The danger is that, without an effective political-education campaign by moderate Muslims, the radicals, albeit in a minority, might be able to set the parameters of political debate. He added that "There are indications that Indonesian moderates are beginning such a mobilization." He continued:

> Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah leaders have appeared together in public to emphasize that Islam does not advocate violence and to warn against the misuse of religion. An increasing number of Muslim scholars are seeking ways to separate Islam from politics following the 'New Islamic Theology of Politics' introduced in the 1980s by Nurcholish Madjid. This school of thought contends that Muslims are not obliged to support Islamic parties; its watchword is 'Islam yes, Islamic party no.' It also seeks to improve educational opportunities for Muslims so that they can become part of the globalized economy. Some Indonesian Muslim leaders, such as former President Wahid, Muhammadiyah chairman Ahmad Syafii Maarif and a younger generation of leaders, are among the spokesmen for this school of 'New Muslim Thinking.'[411]

In an interview published in January 2004, Nurcholish Madjid added that "The Muslims of the Arab world and India have a great past, but we have a great future. We must learn to separate Islam from Arabism — to break the monopoly."[412]

Islam and Education

An important method of strengthening the moderate and tolerant tradition of Indonesian Islam is through religious education. Fu'ad Jabali of the National Islamic Institute in Jakarta, who received his PhD from McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies and whom the Committee met in Indonesia, argued in 2000 that:

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[409] See Ivar Hellberg, *RUSI Newsbrief*, Royal United Services Institute, Vol. 24, No. 1, January 2004, p. 8.

[410] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 35 (1630).

[411] Rabasa, p. 69.

[412] Hitchens, p. 52.

> Over the past two decades, an Islam based on tolerance and inclusiveness has taken root as mainstream Islam in Indonesia. Key factors in this development include the changing role of rural-level Muslim institutions, the continued modernization of Islamic education, and the reorientation of mass Muslim organizations and their emergence as political as well as social forces, and as leaders in the reform movement.
>
> Indonesia's fourteen National Islamic Institutes (IAIN) ... in major centres and thirty-three ... Islamic Colleges in medium sized cities have played a major role in this transformation of Indonesian Islam. Central to this role is the IAIN's approach to Islam. This approach emphasizes critical thought and objective inquiry; interaction with, tolerance and understanding of, and respect for other religions; a participatory, democratic, and inclusive approach to government and development; and respect for the humanistic, tolerant, egalitarian and open traditions of classical Islam.[413]

McGill University has had a strong relationship with Islamic institutes in Indonesia for more than 40 years, assisting them in strengthening their own capacities through exchanges and other assistance. In Indonesia, Committee members were repeatedly told of the value of the McGill program, held in high esteem by all, including Indonesia's government. There is a high degree of Indonesian ownership of these programs, which the Government of Indonesia says is a priority for further cooperation. In addition to building links with Canada, the program addresses broader needs by strengthening the capacity of Indonesian scholars themselves to modernize Islamic education while retaining and strengthening the values of moderate Islam.[414]

While the McGill and other such assistance focuses in the first instance on higher education, the results of these programs "trickle down," since the IAINs train some 80% of teachers for the Islamic education system, which is particularly important in poor and rural areas and includes elementary, junior and secondary schools. While regulated by government, however, such schools are underfunded. At the same time, much basic education is carried out at more than 14,000 traditional religious boarding schools called *pesantren*. While not technically the same as *madrassas*, which also exist in Indonesia, a number of the concerns raised about *madrassas* elsewhere — such as the facts that they serve a social welfare function to which many parents have no alternative, that a few preach extremism, and that their curricula are often inadequate and unregulated by the state — also apply to *pesantren*. The International Crisis Group has argued, however, that while "a tiny fraction" of *pesantren* have been used by members of

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[413] Fu'ad Jabali et. al., "Impact on the Development and Modernization of Islam in Indonesia," *Impact Study: Cooperation Between IAIN and McGill University, Final Report*, May 17, 2000, Executive Summary.

[414] Ibid.

Jemaah Islamiyah to train a new generation of their family members, "the religious education system in Indonesia must not be stigmatised."[415]

While in Indonesia, members visited an NU-led *pesantren* near Jakarta, Pesantren Asshiddiqiah Kedoya, where they were greeted by and spoke with almost 4,000 enthusiastic students between the ages of 7 and 19. There seems to be general acknowledgement that *pesantren* in Indonesia have a more moderate tradition than *madrassas* in Pakistan or elsewhere. In addition to their social welfare function, there is also broad agreement that they provide access to education that many would not otherwise have, particularly poor and rural girls.

Nevertheless, the Government of Indonesia has recognized the need to ensure that the curricula of *pesantren* are modernized, and that qualified teachers and adequate facilities are available in the Islamic education sector. External evaluators have recently completed a major evaluation of the education sector in Indonesia, particularly Islamic education. While not yet available, this report seems likely to recommend placing all primary education under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education — thereby removing the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which currently assists with religious education — a move that will take some time in any event.

Achieving Security

As the home base of the regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiya, Indonesia continues to face a significant threat from international terrorism. As noted above, its response to the regional terrorist threat has been criticized as weak by some, both in terms of coordination and corruption, and, more importantly, a political willingness to publicly identify those responsible. While in Indonesia, however, members were told by Canadians and others that the response of the Indonesian government in this area had improved, although more still needed to be done.

The war on terrorism has increased anti-Americanism in Indonesia, further complicating cooperation in this area. U.S. President George Bush visited Indonesia just days after the visit of the Committee, and religious leaders he met reportedly criticized a number of aspects of U.S. foreign policy, including the war on terrorism and what they saw as double standards in the Middle East. As one leading Indonesian newspaper editorialized on the eve of a visit, "We have a whole warehouse of problems: poverty, corruption, foreign debt, the credibility of our legal system and a difficult transition to democracy. These problems aren't getting enough attention because so much of our energy is being diverted to terrorism, and terrorism in the end is being encouraged by the arrogant attitude of America itself."[416]

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[415] *Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged But Still Dangerous*, International Crisis Group, Asia Report No. 63, August 26, 2003, p. 31.

Ironically, while U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft visited Indonesia in February 2004 to underline the need for continued cooperation in the war on terror, he again refused Indonesia's request for immediate access to Hambali, a top Jemaah Islamiyah operative accused of organizing the Bali nightclub bombings captured by the Central Intelligence Agency in Thailand in August 2003, for the purpose of building cases against other suspected terrorists.[417]

While distinct from international terrorism, Indonesia has also seen a significant amount of other violence that has taken thousands of lives over the past several years and contributed to human rights abuses. Communal riots have taken place in west and central Kalimantan between the Dyaks, the Madureses and other migrants; in the Maluku islands and Sulawesi between Christians and Muslims; and in Java between Javanese and the wealthier Chinese-Indonesian minority. In the wake of the independence of East Timor, Indonesia has also faced renewed violence from longstanding secessionist movements in Aceh and Papua. On a hopeful note, Ann Thomson of South Asia Partnership Canada, who lived and worked in Indonesia for several years, told the Committee that "... the internecine violence in Indonesia ... is well known. What we're seeing is in fact a clumsy and undirected move towards a more representational form of government in Indonesia."[418] While this may be true, Australian Parliamentarians visiting Ottawa in 2003 told members that many of Indonesia's neighbours worry about the continuing violence and other developments in that country.

Witnesses Views in Indonesia

Dr. H.A. Syafi'i Ma'arif, the Chairman of Muhammadiyah and one of Indonesia's most important Muslim leaders — a member of the small delegation of Indonesian leaders that would meet U.S. President Bush a few days later — explained to members that free will and choice are part of Islam, and that even if some Indonesian Muslims are "committed" and some "nominal," there is harmony in the country. He argued that radicalization in Indonesia began a decade ago largely as a result of outside influences, such as an increasing presence of those who had received military training in Afghanistan. While they are vocal, he added that these elements are not deep-rooted in Indonesia, and that "they have the courage to face death, but no courage to face life."

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[416] Quoted in Sidney Jones, "Why Indonesian Distrust the U.S.," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 13, 2003.

[417] Jane Perlez, "Ashcroft Asks Asians to Help on Terror (They Want Help, Too)," *New York Times*, (online), February 5, 2004.

[418] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 49 (1255).

Following a visit to the largest mosque in Southeast Asia, Mesjid Istiqlal, Council of Ulamas (religious scholars) Chairman Professor Dr. H. Umar Shihab and other male and female council members again told the Committee of the *moderate*, *tolerant* and *inclusive* traditions of Indonesian Islam. Professor Dr. H. Umar Shihab argued that most conflicts in Indonesia were over economic, social, resource and other factors rather than religion, although religion can and has been used as a propaganda tool. He explained that Islamic law is limited to such areas as trade, social issues and education rather than politics, and the People's Consultative Assembly had voted against the adoption of *sharia* law. He added that interreligious relations are positive and peaceful, including between Muslims and Jews, although they disagree on the issue of Palestine.

Former Minister of Religious Affairs Mr. Tarmizi Taher argued that Indonesia sees itself as neither secular no religious, but rather pro-religion. While most Indonesians were Muslim they were not Arab, and, in fact, since they were so far from the Middle East "we are less Arabized." On the question of Saudi funding, Dr. Fu'ad Jabali of the State Islamic University (IAIN) argued that this had really started after the Iranian revolution in an attempt to restrict the influence of Shiite Islam. Even if the Saudis tried to set conditions on charitable funding, however, he argued that the nature of Indonesian society tended to moderate foreign ideas.

Mr. Sumargono, vice-president of the Crescent Star Party and a member of the People's Consultative Assembly, pointed out that the existence of traditionalists and modernists in Indonesia was reflected in the fact that some wanted Islamic culture to remain a private issue and refused to participate in politics, while others wanted an Islamic structure reflected in political parties. An official of Nahdlatatul Ulama noted that Indonesia was still in a transition to democracy, which he estimated would take another 5-6 years. In response to a question on group versus individual rights, he replied that the goal in Asia was to balance such things. Mr. Ibrahim Ambong, the Chair of the powerful Committee I of the Indonesian Parliament, added that Indonesians would like to learn how to balance human rights and security. He added that sometimes conflicts with minorities were caused by economic issues.

In terms of education, Dr. Fu'ad Jabali commented that Canadians were not really foreigners at the State Islamic University, given the presence of such a large numbers of McGill graduates. Since most Indonesians were poor they could only send their children to either *madrassas* or *pesantren*, which made education very important, and many IAIN graduates teach at such schools in Indonesia. Many of the books used in *pesantren* were written years ago, however, and do not mention such concepts as human rights. As a result, IAIN scholars were trying to be a "bridge" with the modern world, in part by developing a new vocabulary. Only a few *pesantren* teach extremism, while such organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah promote tolerance and strengthen civil society and democracy through *madrassas* and *pesantren*.

Officials at the Ministry of Religious Affairs clarified that the Ministry did not deal with the spiritual lives of religious communities in Indonesia, but with their interaction. It provides funding both to serve the needs of these groups and to promote harmony, which includes harmony *between* religious groups, *within* religious groups, and between religious groups and the government. Dr. H. M. Atho Mudzhar, the Head of Research, Development and Religious Affairs at the Ministry, told members that "national unity is very much dependent, among other things, on religious harmony in Indonesia." While the Ministry of Education is responsible for general education in the country, the Ministry of Religious Affairs helps religious education in *madrassas*, including trying to revise curricula to reflect reality. The officials argued that the task was to develop cultural rather than political Islam. The issue of Wahhabbism is not new, and is more a theological than a political one. While religious leaders had pledged not to misuse religious symbols for political purposes before the 1999 election, there were again concerns in this area in light of the upcoming elections.

In terms of terrorism, Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas explained that while Indonesia had never differed with the United States and others on the *essence* of fighting terrorism, it had sometimes differed on the *method* by which to do so. While the United States argues that it is not fighting Islam in the war on terrorism, it was important to address the roots of the problem, which include a sense of injustice and alienation that are expressed especially in the unresolved conflict in Palestine. Increased discussion of terrorism and a "clash of civilizations" was important, since over the years in foreign policy he had seen that once preconceived notions took hold, they were very difficult to change. The Indonesian government would work to combat the perception that Indonesia was a dangerous place, and hoped its friends would work to combat these and other preconceived notions as well. While dialogue was necessary, it could not just be among the converted.

Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group addressed the issue of terrorism and violence, arguing that the critical factor drawing Indonesians into terrorist violence was neither the Middle East conflict nor poverty, adding that such violence was not bred in the Islamic schools system. She noted that the majority of people already arrested were third-generation rebels, arguing the critical factor was family lineage, fuelled by other factors. In her words, "this is not a club anyone can join." Not only was the Jemaah Islamiya terrorist network not expanding, as a result of arrests it was probably contracting. She added that we should not try to deal with Islamic schools in counter-terrorist terms. Finally, while there were a number of Indonesians who favoured the adoption of *sharia* law, they were willing to pursue this peacefully and democratically, and even most of the radicals who favour the establishment of an Islamic state would not use violence.

In terms of specific Canadian cooperation, officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs told members that Canadian cooperation such as that with McGill University was important to Indonesia, and that more along these lines would be helpful, particularly on how to promote "inclusive Islam." Representatives of Nahdlatatul Ulama told the Committee that the organization had sent students to Canada over the years, and would like to do more of this sort of work in the future. It would also welcome Canadian scholars, including language teachers, to come and teach while living at *pesantren* in Indonesia, which were very different from *madrassas* in the Middle East. Ms. Clara Joewono of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (Indonesia) added that Canada could do more in terms of gender issues, especially the education of women.

Directions for Canadian Policy

Canada and Indonesia celebrated 50 years of diplomatic relations in 2002-2003, and relations are strong and positive. Economically, Indonesia is both Canada's third-largest export market in the region and the third largest destination for Canadian investment in Asia. Overall, Canada's priority in relations with Indonesia is to assist the continued democratic development of that country.

Canadian development assistance to Indonesia began in 1954, and has shifted over the years from support for large government-sponsored infrastructure programs to focus more on governance. As Hau Sing Tse of CIDA explained in Ottawa:

> … political freedom has also resulted in an explosive growth of civil society organizations that were suppressed in the past. CIDA's program in Indonesia has evolved in line with the needs of the country. Since 1997, CIDA has been focusing on promoting good governance, human rights, and democratic development at the central and local levels, stimulating the growth of small and medium enterprises that create jobs for the poor, and improving the well-being of communities through more sustainable management of natural resources and their environment.[419]

While CIDA assistance to Indonesia reached a high of some $75 million in 1985-1986, current assistance stands at about $23 million yearly. In terms of assistance for education reform such as that carried out by McGill University, CIDA has assisted three major projects in this area since the early 1980s, the most recent of which saw an $8 million CIDA grant matched by a $5 million grant from the Indonesian government.

As noted above, Indonesia is of key importance both in Southeast Asia and in the broader debate over relations with the Muslim world. Uner Turgay and other also emphasized the particular respect with which Canada is seen in the region following the war in Iraq. This provides Canada with a unique opportunity. On the one hand, the Committee's visit convinced members that Canada can usefully continue and even increase support in Indonesia for democratization and governance reform, as well as education, civil society and conflict resolution.

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[419] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 50 (1105).

At the same time, as an ally in the international campaign against terrorism that did not participate in the invasion of Iraq, Canada can also assist Indonesia in critical areas such as counter-terrorism, while at the same time disproving the perception that such actions are driven solely by the United States, or are inherently anti-Muslim. As argued persuasively by Daryl Copeland about Asia more generally, Canada could " … develop a niche in the post 9-11 global security architecture by strengthening ties to moderate democratic Islamic countries — Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh … to cultivate innovative new approaches to improving international security and combating terrorism. With its exceptional bilateral political relations Canada has a comparative advantage here and could demonstrate the link between diplomacy and security in ways that the United States and Europeans cannot.[420]

RECOMMENDATION 27

Recognizing the recent democratic progress made by Indonesia, notably in embracing pluralism, as well as its potential as a model for the rest of the Muslim world, the Government of Canada should continue to both encourage and assist the Government of Indonesia in emphasizing pluralism as a key element of its democracy.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Government of Canada should continue to strengthen its bilateral cooperation with Indonesia in the areas of democracy and governance; support civil society groups that work to reduce ethnic and other tensions; and support education reform, building on the exemplary experiences of McGill University's programs.

RECOMMENDATION 29

Canada should also pursue increased counter-terrorist and security cooperation with the Government of Indonesia, including for the peaceful resolution of ethnic and other conflicts.

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[420] Copeland, p. 290.

Malaysia

> *In response to (opposition Islamic party) PAS' demand for an Islamic state (governing party) UMNO leaders took the position that Malaysia was already an Islamic country (even a "fundamentalist" Islamic country by virtue of its subscription to the "fundamental principles" of Islam) ... Nevertheless, the Mahathir government's Islamisation campaign has not changed the fundamental structure of the country's legal, political and administrative system, which is based on the British model and to a large extent reflects the Western political tradition ...*[421]
>
> *UNMO's success in finding a new balance between the expectations of its Malay constituency and the requirements of governing a modernizing, multi-ethnic society will determine whether PAS' brand of political Islam will be contained as the political project of a minority within the Malay Muslim community, or whether it comes to threaten Malaysia's model of political compromise and coexistence among the country's various communities.*[422]
>
> Angel Rabasa

In contrast to Indonesia, which has an overwhelmingly Muslim population and is attempting to consolidate democracy, Malaysia is a prosperous and successful multi-ethnic state with a small Muslim majority that has been formally democratic for decades. At the same time, Malaysia presents a seeming paradox. While widely viewed as a moderate Muslim majority state, its government has long pursued a formal Islamisation program and describes the country not as a moderate, but as a "fundamentalist" Islamic state. It has also taken a leading role in criticizing perceived injustices to Muslims around the world on the international scene.

The argument usually used to explain this situation is that long-time Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad used both the rhetoric and the reality of Islamisation in an attempt to blunt the attacks of the Islamist opposition Parti Islam sa-Malaysia (PAS), a truly fundamentalist party that favours the imposition of *sharia*-based state in Malaysia. As Gwynne Dyer argued in an October 2003 article that labelled Dr. Mahathir "an old fool" because of controversial remarks he made that month, "Dr. Mahathir is not a religious extremist. He spent his long political career (which ends with his retirement this month) finding ways to unite Malaysia's spectacularly diverse ethnic and religious communities in building a prosperous and peaceful society, and he has been remarkably successful."[423]

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[421] Rabasa, p. 41.

[422] Ibid., p. 45-46.

[423] Gwynne Dyer, "Two Fanatics and an Old Fool," October 19, 2003, article accessed at http://www.gwynnedyer.net

While in Malaysia, however, the Committee was told by a number of witnesses that two decades of Islamisation have, perhaps inevitably, resulted in a more conservative and less-integrated multicultural society. On the international front, David Dewitt told the Committee that Malaysian political leaders have used positions on such issues as the Israel-Palestine dispute as a "mobilizing force" largely for domestic political reasons. In his words, " ... it allows them at a great distance to take what is considered a principled stand within the Islamic community for their integrity, credibility, and political position at no cost. As soon as the Israeli-Palestinian situation is resolved within Israel and Palestine, they'll move on. It's not an issue for them. Right now it's convenient and something they can use." At the same time, however, he warned that such strategies can backfire " ... because of the protracted nature of the politics, the way it has been absorbed into their educational system and their media is such that while the elites may be able to move on very quickly when and if there's a negotiated resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian accord, many of the people will find that adjustment much more difficult."[424]

Malaysia offers important lessons in the management of diverse ethnic and religious communities in Southeast Asia, and in the growing influence of Islam in the politics and society of one key state in the region. With Prime Minister Mahathir's resignation in the fall of 2003 just weeks after the Committee's visit, it remains to be seen to what extent the government of new Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi continues or adapts the policies begun under Mahathir, and their implications both for Malaysia and for its relations with Canada and other Western states.

A Multi-ethnic Democracy

Malaysia is a federation composed of two regions separated by over 1,000 kilometres of South China Sea.[425] Its population of some 25 million is composed of a small Malay majority (58%), with a significant ethnic Chinese (26%), Indian (7%) and other (9%) minorities. Malaysia's geographic, ethnic and cultural diversity has played an important role in shaping the political development of the country, whose political parties are largely based on ethnicity, locality or religion. Ethnic relations have played a particularly key role since independence in 1957; and when Singapore with its predominantly ethnic Chinese population withdrew from the Federation of Malaysia in 1965, political power switched to ethnic Malays.

Strained relations between the Malay majority and the wealthier ethnic Chinese minority came to a head when the governing United Malay National

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[424] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1230).

[425] The following draws on the Economist Intelligence Unit, *Malaysia Country Profile 2003*.

Organization (UNMO) party lost seats in the 1969 general election, and anti-Chinese rioting in which almost 1,000 died erupted in Kuala Lumpur. (Likewise, ethnic Chinese were also attacked at the time of the Asian crisis in 1997-1998.) Parliamentary government was suspended for 21 months as a result, and a broader coalition government later implemented positive discrimination measures in favour of the *bumiputera* ("sons of the soil," ethnic Malays and other indigenous people, together accounting for about 63% of the population) designed to improve their economic weight and so lessen interracial tensions. As a result of a combination of *bumiputera* policies and a prohibition on immigration from China, by 2003 Malaysia's Malay population was increasing, while its ethnic Chinese minority was decreasing.

Malaysia saw impressive economic growth beginning in the 1970s which over the next decades allowed it to virtually eliminate poverty, and perhaps reduced minority criticism of *bumiputera* policies. While the Asian economic crash of the late 1990s caused a crisis, this was less severe in Malaysia than in other regional states, largely due to the refusal of the Mahathir government to follow the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund and others. Outside Malaysia, Mahathir was also widely criticized at the time for blaming the crisis on the actions of American financier George Soros.

Despite regular and free votes since independence, the dominance of a single political party has continued to constrain the democratic process in Malaysia. As Noah Feldman has argued:

> … there have been regular, basically free elections every five years since independence in 1957. Essentially the same ruling coalition has remained in power all that time, but Islamic parties participate in the elections, and Islamic political ideas have gradually become to some extent mainstream … but the stability and extraordinary economic growth of Malaysia have not been accompanied by impressive gains in basic civil liberties. To the contrary, in recent years, free speech and association, never strongly protected, have been further curtailed.[426]

The Malaysian government moved more toward authoritarianism in 1987, when Dr. Mahathir almost lost power. He responded by consolidating his power within his party, then moved over the next year to reduce the power of and intimidate the judiciary, change the constitution, and reduce checks and balances on the government.[427] Feldman continued:

> The capstone in this process of jailing dissidents under the draconian Internal Security Act was the arrest and show trial of Anwar Ibrahim erstwhile Deputy Prime Minister and protégé of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. A modernist-Islamist politician and former youth

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[426] Feldman, p. 114.

[427] *Malaysia Country Profile 2003*, Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 7.

movement leader who rose rapidly as the government sought to co-opt the Islamists during the period of economic growth, Ibrahim disagreed publicly with his mentor about fiscal policy when Malaysia ran into tough economic times. Once Ibrahim began to appear as a potential challenger, the Prime Minister's embrace turned to more of a stranglehold. Mohamad contrived to have Ibrahim convicted of sodomy and thrown in prison, where he remains.[428]

Islamisation and Mahathir's Legacy

While Malaysia was declared to be a secular nation on independence,[429] and the practice of other religions is guaranteed, Islam is the official religion of the country. More disturbingly to some, Malaysia's majority Malay population is defined as Muslim in the country's constitution, thereby linking ethnic and religious groups.

Malaysia's Islamic opposition PAS was established in 1951, and has contested every Parliamentary election since 1957. It has controlled one province, Kelantan since 1959. Soon after Dr. Mahathir Mohammad became Prime Minister in 1981, however, the Islamic opposition increased in strength, and Mahathir responded in part by co-opting Anwar Ibrahim, and promising and carrying out his own Islamisation campaign thereafter. In the opinion of some, however, by doing so he legitimized the PAS agenda, while engaging in an "Islamisation race" he could not win.

The government's treatment of Anwar Ibrahim played a role in a significant loss of Malay support for the governing party in the elections of November 1999, and an increase in the vote for PAS, which regained control in one state and made gains in others. The September 11 terrorist attacks discredited Islamic extremism, and Prime Minister Mahathir moved to exploit this. At the same time, he countered a PAS pledge that it would establish an "Islamic state" if it won the next general election by arguing that Malaysia was already an Islamic state — in fact, a "fundamentalist" one[430] — and promising further Islamisation.

Malaysia has been an important (if quiet) Southeast Asian partner in the war on terrorism. Among other actions, it has held roughly 100 suspected extremists under its Internal Security Act, which allows for detention without trial — a legacy of British colonial administration. In November 2003, Malaysia adopted new counter-terror laws that Human Rights Watch told the UN

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[428] Feldman, p. 114.

[429] Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 8.

[430] "Mahathir: Malaysia is Fundamentalist State," CNN.com, June 18, 2002, http://edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/06/18/malaysia.mahathir/

Commission on Human Rights were "widely criticized by local human rights groups for being vague and overbroad, thus putting at risk the basic rights of free expression, association and assembly."[431]

Anwar Ibrahim — an informed observer if perhaps not a neutral one — has argued from prison that the war on terrorism has represented a setback for democracy in Southeast Asia. In his opinion, the cause of this setback " … is not terrorism itself, but the war against terrorism, which is being waged in the name of freedom and democracy. Instead of harnessing democratic energy in the region, it has strengthened the hand of authoritarianism." He continued:

> Re-energized authoritarian regimes gloat over the so-called wisdom of repressive laws and acts. Under pressure from the United States, they have tightened the screws on dissent by describing dissenters as terrorists or Taliban. To appease their domestic audiences, however, they make strident anti-American noises, accusing the Bush administration of hypocrisy and double standards. Their spin doctors write of imperialistic designs, condemn America's treatment of suspected terrorists and accuse it of human rights abuses — all the while ignoring the stench in their own backyard.[432]

While cooperating in the war against terrorism, however, Mahathir also called for an international response that addressed "root causes," and loudly criticized the invasion of Iraq. His last international platform came at the OIC Summit held in Malaysia at the time of the Committee's visit. Mahathir's address as host made a number of points about the need for the Muslim world to work together and play to its strengths. International attention, however, focused on the far more controversial elements of the speech, where he spoke of enemies and added that "The Europeans killed 6 million Jews out of 12 million. But today the Jews rule this world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them."[433] The speech was well received at the Summit, although international reaction was sharply critical, pointing out that it singled out Jews for criticism rather than Israeli government policy.

For over 20 years Mahathir Mohamad has often been controversial in the West, yet is widely accepted to have delivered growth and stability while preserving a moderate Muslim democracy in Malaysia. David Dewitt told the Committee that "aspects of his politics and his policies are repugnant, as with their continuing to publicize the infamous protocols of the elders of Zion, or the way he has used Islamic identities and connections for narrow sectoral interests. Yet other aspects of his government are to be admired, notably in national development, education, and progress in women's rights."[434]

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[431] Human Rights Watch, "Human Rights and Counter-Terrorism," Briefing to the 60th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, January 2004.

[432] Anwar Ibrahim, "A Passion For Freedom," *The Economist, The World in 2004*, 2003, p. 79.

[433] Speech by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Hon. Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, at the Opening of the Tenth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, October 16, 2003.

The argument that Mahathir had adopted Islamist rhetoric and policies to reduce the attraction of PAS got support when, soon after he announced his intention to retire, he proposed a series of measures in the area of education. These were designed, in the words of Angel Rabasa, "to break the hold of militant Islam on Malaysian education," and included the regulation of private Islamic schools. Rabasa concludes that these new initiatives "point to the exhaustion of the policy of Islamisation that has informed UMNO's philosophy of governance since the early 1980s."[435] He also argues that Malaysia is unlikely to ever become a fully *sharia*-based state for a number of reasons, including: the dichotomized nature of its society — with Malays constituting only a small majority overall, and no majority in important regions; disagreement among Malays themselves over what type of Islam they would like to see in Malaysia; and the strength of the secular institutions that provide the framework for Malaysian political and economic life.[436]

While the Committee's visit to Malaysia confirmed that that country had played a positive and moderate role in terms of relations between the Muslim world and the West, it also underlined a number of concerns about the domestic situation in that country. While the government's long-term policies of positively discriminating in favour of the *bumiputera* and further Islamising the country are for Malaysians to pass judgment on, their combination does seem to have resulted in a still modern and moderate society that has become more rigid over time, with implications both for the Malay majority and ethnic minorities. A number of interlocutors discussed various aspects of this rigidity, ranging from laws prohibiting the holding of hands in public to a general perception that members of different ethnic and religious groups mix together less now on a social basis than in the past.[437] At the same time, interlocutors were clear that while Canada and other states could assist civil society groups in Malaysia as they seek to strengthen institutions of governance and argue for change, high-profile involvement in such areas as gender equality would probably be counterproductive.

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[434] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 45 (1110).

[435] Rabasa, p. 45.

[436] Ibid., p. 70.

[437] When asked about laws prohibiting holding hands in public, Noah Feldman replied that "Holding hands in a public park, though a value that certainly I myself would want permitted under any conditions in a society that I would live in, is one that suggests to me something within the reasonable range of decision-making that governments can make with respect to regulating public behaviour. Where cultural norms think it's OK to dress in a certain way or to behave in a certain way with members of the opposite sex in public, then I think there is room for governments that still respect individual liberties to be sensitive to cultural particularities." *Evidence*, Meeting No. 58 (1155).

After two decades of rule by a dominant individual, the new government of Abdullah Badawi deserves a chance to place its own stamp on Malaysia. In this respect, some were surprised when, rather than the homage to Mahathir many had expected, his first speech to Parliament as Prime Minister seemed to imply a more open and tolerant style of government.[438] As an Islamic scholar who has not been linked to corruption, Abdullah was well placed to defend the Malaysian government's secular version of Islam, although some argued that if PAS posted further gains in the elections of 2004, Abdullah would face a challenge to his leadership. In the event, the ruling coalition achieved a landslide victory in the Parliamentary and state elections of March 2004, winning 195 of 219 seats in the federal Parliament and regaining control of the state captured by PAS in 1999.[439]

Witnesses Views in Malaysia

Tan Sri Dato' Noordin Sopiee, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the country's pre-eminent think tank, the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), argued that Malaysia is unique in many respects, and can be a useful model that can also help break negative stereotypes prevalent in the West. Among other characteristics, Malaysia is a very Western-oriented and prosperous trading nation, and one whose Muslim majority is used to living with others. A "committed Muslim," he repeated that Islam in Southeast Asia is moderate, adding that since Malaysians believe sincerely in moderation and pragmatism, they have worked to develop a form of Islam that is moderate and balanced. The fact that the Islamic opposition PAS contested elections meant people did not have to turn to violence. He added that "in some countries even the moderates are extreme; in this country, even the extremists are moderate."

A long-time journalist and editor, he responded to questions about the independence of the media by arguing that all governments attempt to control the press, adding that in Malaysia at least this is done openly through party ownership of various newspapers. On the question of individual versus group rights, while there were laws on the books against many things, these were not enforced. In terms of minority rights, the fact that it was necessary to get the support of more than one group to win elections provided balance. There was a "clash" in the world today, but it was between traditionalists and modernists.

ISIS Director General Dato' Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, a former government official with experience in national security issues, addressed the subject of terrorism, which he pointed out could be used both by state and non-state actors. Citing the example of the African National Congress in South Africa, he argued that it was necessary to distinguish methods from causes, adding that the Palestinians should be seen in this context. Terrorism has a long history and did not begin in September 2001, yet the fact that those attacks targeted the United States meant that this was automatically seen as a universal problem. In fact, while modern terrorism does benefit from high technology and increased travel, he argued that "international terrorism" was often a euphemism for anti-American terrorism.

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[438] Jonathan Kent, "Malaysia's PM Pledges Openness," BBC News (Online), November 3, 2003.

[439] "Abdullah Sworn in as Malaysian PM", BBC News (online), March 22, 2004.

Depending upon definitions, it was possible to argue that the terrorist threat in Southeast Asia was lower now than it had been in the past. While Jemaah Islamiya had attracted international attention with bombings in Bali and Jakarta, there was little support for its "domestic" agenda of establishing a regional caliphate. Malaysia works very closely with other states on counter-terrorism, and has a "zero tolerance" policy in this area. In regional terms, Indonesia faces important difficulties in this area as a large state that is difficult to monitor, and one where Islam is a powerful political force. The fight against terrorism must be political rather than military, since it is a fight for hearts and minds and we must take away popular support for terrorism. He added that we must understand the enemy and address root causes rather than creating new ones; for this reason, the international war on terrorism is a losing one.

Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, who had formerly been vice-president of an opposition political party and director of the Centre for Civilizational Dialogue at the University of Malaya, explained the work of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), of which he is president. Drawing on an advisory board that includes American intellectual/activist Noam Chomsky, JUST works to promote cultural understanding and the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to challenge what it sees as the social and economic inequities inherent in the process of globalization.

On domestic issues, he argued that Malaysia had a bright future compared to its neighbours given its stable politics and good economy, although it could not rely forever on individual leadership and needed to strengthen the institutions of governance. In terms of the perception of increasing Islamisation, Dr. Chandra, a Muslim convert, responded that there was a bit of nostalgia at play in this analysis. Islam had always been very important in the country, but while Malaysian cities had long been dominated by non-Malays and non-Muslims, as demographics changed Malays became more conscious of their identity. Such things were part of a process, and might change again in the future.

There were real problems in terms of the protection of minorities and a "creeping intolerance" at the local level, that must be addressed. In terms of the separation of church and state, each society had to be looked at in terms of its own history. Ethical values should be part of the public sphere, and a moderate society should have values that transcend religion. The problem was in the interpretation of religion. He agreed that it was good to have PAS participating in elections, where the government could engage and hopefully defeat them. When asked if Western nations seemed arrogant when discussing human rights with Muslim majority states and others he responded no, since such rights were universal.

In terms of international relations, he believed that "the major issue in the Muslim world is undoubtedly Palestine," which resonates so much because it is seen as an attempt to grab land and territory in a part of the world that is Arab and Muslim. This has nothing to do with relations between Arabs and Jews, however, who have lived together well in the past. From that perspective, Prime Minister Mahathir's recent controversial comments should have talked about "political Zionism" rather than "Jews." Foreign policy is a mixture of pragmatism and theory and, like all policy, must reflect voters. Since the majority of Malaysians are Muslim, this has to be reflected in the country's foreign policy, particularly on such key issues such as Palestine and Iraq.

He argued that the United States did not want real democracy in oil-producing states such as Saudi Arabia (or Nigeria), adding that despite its oil wealth, Saudi Arabia had done little for women. Groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah were on the fringe, and he did not believe the states of the region would gravitate toward extremist politics, since they were multiracial, and better educated. Noting the existence of the two major moderate Muslim groups in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, he warned against a stereotyped view of that country.

Overall, he argued that there was no "clash of civilizations," but rather a clash of fundamentalisms between some in the Muslim world and some in the West. The argument was really between those who took texts literally and those who understood them in terms of underlying values and context. Canada has a good reputation in the Muslim world, and he urged it to speak out more internationally. In terms of bilateral relations, he noted the value of the McGill program in Indonesia, and argued that more exchanges between all levels of society would be useful.

Professor Syed Serajul Islam, a Canadian political scientist from Lakehead University who specializes in South and Southeast Asia and is currently teaching in Malaysia, summarized a written submission to the Committee and answered questions. Among other points, he argued that only a very few in Malaysia were opposed to liberal values, and pointed out that Islam can thrive in liberal multicultural societies such as Canada. Malaysians did distinguish between Canada and the United States, and he argued that Canada should continue to maintain an independent foreign policy centred on the United Nations. It should also continue to assist in areas such as democratic reform — which is necessary, among other reasons, to eliminate terrorism — including in wealthier countries.

A knowledgeable Canadian with long experience in the region took issue with the argument that Saudi funding had had little impact in Malaysia and Asia more generally, arguing the opposite. As a result of continued Saudi funding since the early 1970s, in many respects he believed the culture of Malaysian Islam had now been hijacked by Arabs, and particularly Wahhabis. The key was education, and he argued for a paradigm shift that would see CIDA focus on assisting primary education, as long as this was based on a secular curriculum. He also argued that Canada should also establish both a foreign intelligence agency and a satellite television presence in the region.

In order to learn about the role of women in Malaysia as well as the broader Muslim world, the Committee met with Y.B. Dato' Seri Shahrizat binti Abdul Jalil, Malaysia's Minister for Women and Family Development. While members challenged the minister's views on a number of occasions, they welcomed the opportunity to discuss them with her as an important contribution to their understanding of Malaysian society.

The Minister explained the work of her ministry, which had been established in 2000, and whose vision is "to achieve gender equality and a stable family institution." While challenges remained and it was still necessary to mainstream women's issues, she argued that the key both for women in Malaysia and other Muslim majority countries was to "work smart." A lawyer and former judge, the minister argued that women have the same rights as men in Islam, and it was when the religion was misinterpreted that there were problems. Problems with the role of women were often cultural rather than religious in any event. While she believed that most women in Saudi Arabia were probably just as happy not to drive cars anyway, she added that "if women want to get out of that quagmire, they will." She did not believe that Malaysia could do much to improve the status of women in the Middle East, however, given Arab culture. Also, she had been "appalled and disgusted" that an official dinner at the OIC summit had segregated men and women. This was not a Malaysian policy, and she suspected it was the work either of an overzealous official or the OIC secretariat.

The key issues in terms of religious law were both interpretation — especially on the part of older judges — and implementation. Legislation is important, but given that laws can be changed the key was the national mindset. While admitting that those who follow the Koran in such respects as modest dress were not always totally "free" in Western terms, she argued that religion gave strength. Similarly, she did not believe that such issues as headscarves were so important, since religion is in the heart. She argued that the Islamist opposition in Malaysia did not do women justice. At the same time, she disagreed that there was a creeping "fundamentalism" in Malaysia — agreeing with Prime Minister Mahathir that it was already fundamentalist — adding that the fear was extremism. Overall, democracy in Malaysia is more realistic. While there is nothing a Muslim woman cannot do as an individual, it was important to think as well in terms of the culture and the nation.

In addition to the above meetings, Committee members also met both formally and informally with a number of NGO and civil society interlocutors, including representatives from women's groups, the youth movement, Parliament and academia. While not all these interlocutors had the chance to present their views fully, such meetings reinforced many of the positive messages about Malaysia, while also underlining challenges faced by women and others there as society has become more conservative.

As in other countries visited by the Committee, Islam itself is not a problem in this respect, but its conservative interpretation — in conjunction with cultural and other factors such as patriarchy — may be. No one the Committee met in Malaysia was ready to give up on either their democratic principles or their religion, however. In this respect, they would likely agree with Sheema Khan of the Council on American — Islamic Relations Canada when, referring to Muslim women around the world, she declares that "The key is faith in God as the foundation of self-empowerment."[440] Senator Mobina Jaffer argued similarly that "I believe it is only when women are educated that they will have choices that will enable them to interpret the Koran, which in turn will empower them to attain equality."[441]

Directions For Canadian Policy

Relations between Canada and Malaysia have been good for decades, both bilaterally and in terms of cooperation in such multilateral fora as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum. Canada believes that as a moderate, multiracial Muslim majority nation, Malaysia exercises a positive influence as the Chair of both the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Malaysia has also been an important partner in the war on terrorism in Southeast Asia.

At the same time, Canada remains concerned about some aspects of Malaysia's democracy. Relations were strained when Canada expressed concerns about the politically motivated arrest and trial of Anwar Ibrahim. Also, while in Malaysia the Committee was told about concerns regarding the continued use of detention without trial, the independence of both the judiciary and the media, and Malaysia's treatment of some refugee claimants.

Canadian Official Development Assistance to Malaysia began in 1950. Such assistance is based on need, and Malaysia's strong economic growth in recent decades has reduced this need dramatically. Hau Sing Tse of CIDA told the Committee in Ottawa that:

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[440] Sheema Khan, "Don't Misread the Koran," *Globe and Mail*, February 14, 2003, p. A17.

[441] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 47 (1145).

> In recent years, CIDA has assisted Malaysia in making the transition from aid recipient to Canada's number one trade partner in Southeast Asia. A total of $2.5 billion in trade was transacted in 2002, with programs that emphasized economic policy and cooperation between Canadian and Malaysian institutions and enterprises, including entrepreneurial and managerial training for Malaysian women. In light of Malaysia's impressive development achievements, our development assistance activities in this country are fairly limited in scope.[442]

In fact, Canada decided in the late 1990s to gradually phase out bilateral assistance to Malaysia; for all intents and purposes, Malaysia will be graduated from most bilateral and partnership assistance in 2004. On one hand, this decision is justified given that CIDA's priority is the reduction of poverty, which has been virtually eliminated in Malaysia. At the same time, despite Malaysia largely positive and moderate role in the region, the Committee believes it is important to ensure that adequate resources remain available both to help strengthen the instruments of governance in that country, and to assist civil society groups.

RECOMMENDATION 30

Given that most Canadian development assistance to Malaysia will end in 2004, the Government of Canada should ensure adequate resources remain available to continue working with other countries and moderate civil-society groups — particularly women's groups — to strengthen institutions of governance and support democratic development, pluralism, minority and other human rights in Malaysia.

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[442] *Evidence*, Meeting No. 50, (1105).

APPENDIX I: PROFILE OF THE "MUSLIM WORLD" BY REGION AND COUNTRY

This profile of the "Muslim world" provides information on population, type of government, and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for countries in which Muslims make up a minimum of 10% of the population or they number over one million. It was compiled using figures from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) *World Factbook 2003*[443], the United States Department of State *International Religious Freedom Report* for 2003[444], and the United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report 2002*.

Table I gives regional[445] totals and averages, adding to a world total of over 1.4 billion followers of Islam.[446] Chart I shows the relative size of the Muslim population of the different regions, as well as of the countries with more than one million Muslims. For comparative purposes, figures for the G7 countries are shown in Table II.[447]

Table III provides the detailed list of countries. It gives figures for:

- the estimated total population in 2003;
- the estimated population growth rate in 2003;
- percentage of the population that is Muslim, showing the percent of the population that is Sunni, Shi'a, or, in some instances, follows other forms of Islam;
- the Muslim population, calculated by multiplying the total population by the percentage that is Muslim (where there is a range, the higher percentage was used);
- the type of government;

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[443] http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html

[444] http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2003/index.htm.

[445] "Asia" includes the former Soviet Central Asian states, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. "Europe" includes all the Russian Federation. "Middle East and North Africa" includes Cyprus, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.

[446] This number errs on the high side. The Central Intelligence Agency *World Factbook 2003* puts the figure at 1.24 billion.

[447] France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States are also listed in Table III because each has more than one million Muslims.

- the "Democracy Score"[448], which rates countries on the presence of institutional factors necessary for democracy using a scale that goes from –10 (authoritarian) to 10 (democratic);

- the GDP per capita (purchasing power parity) in U.S. dollars for the year 2002;

- the GDP growth rate in 2002.

It should be noted that the figures for Muslim populations are estimates, as are the proportions of the Muslim population that are Sunni or Shi'a. As well, the tables do not show the various subdivisions within these sects nor, with some exceptions, other forms of Islam. Followers of other forms are noted where they form a significant part of the population — the Sufi (followers of Sufism, a mystical form of Islam) in Chad, the Bektashi (a liberal form of Shi'a Sufism) in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Ibadhi (a distinct sect) in Oman, and the Amadhiyya (a contemporary messianic movement) in Suriname.

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[448] The "Democracy Score" is taken from the United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report 2002*. It is called the "polity score" in Table A1.1 of the report.

TABLE I

Regional Totals of Countries with a Muslim Population Greater than 10 Percent or in Excess of One Million

Region[449]	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Average Population Growth Rate	Total Muslim Population (millions)	Average GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	Average GDP Growth Rate
Asia	3,139.9	1.6%	733.1	$6,035	6.0%
Middle East and North Africa	405.5	2.2%	388.8	$8,626	1.7%
Sub-Saharan Africa	547.9	2.3%	244.1	$1,269	2.9%
Europe	356.8	0.3%	35.5	$14,114	2.5%
Other	127.2	0.6%	5.1	$14,500	1.6%
World	**4,451.4**	**1.4%**	**1,406.6**	**$8,909**	**2.9%**

Source: Table III.

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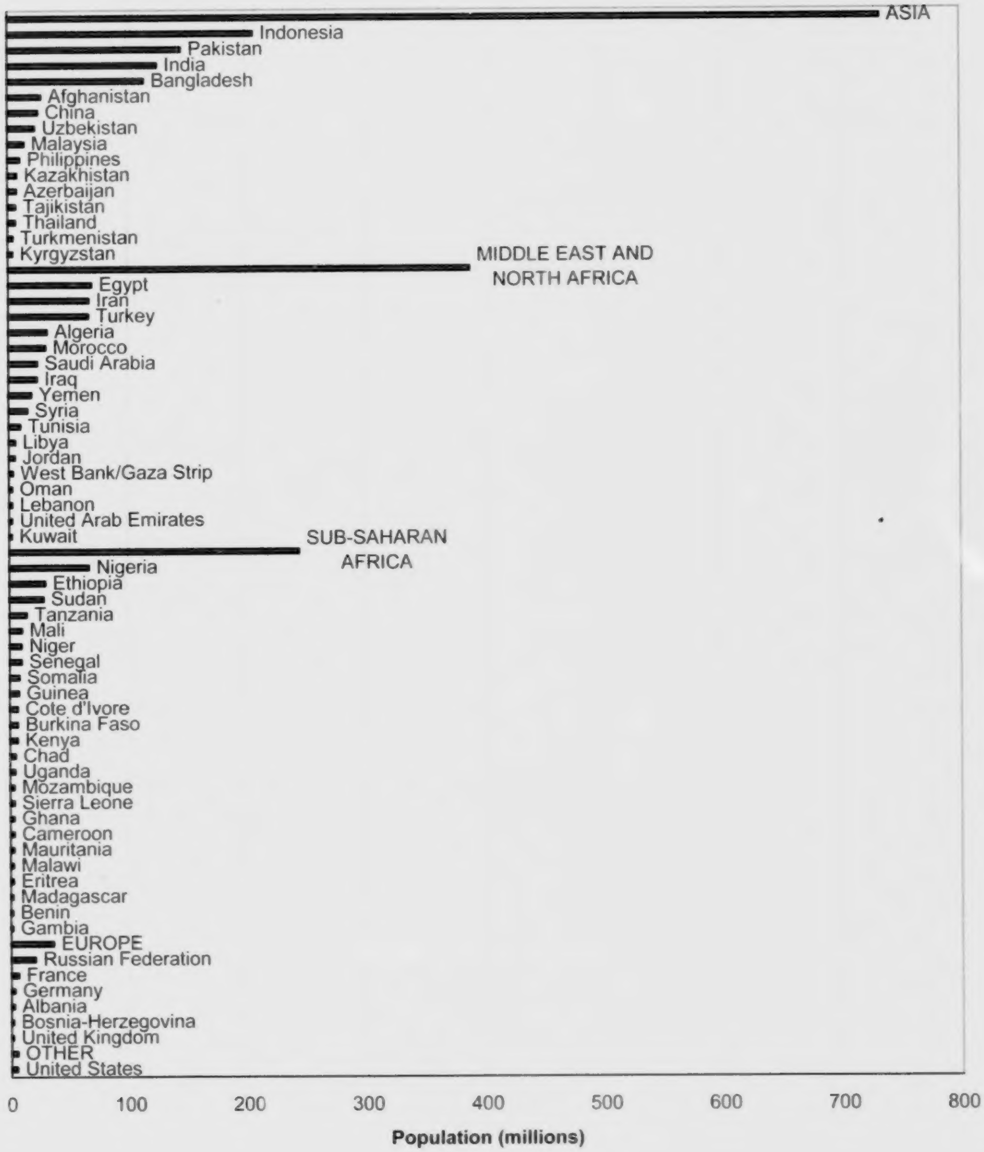
[449] "Asia" includes the former Soviet Central Asian states, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. "Europe" includes all of the Russian Federation. "Middle East and North Africa" includes Cyprus, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.

Chart I
Countries with a Muslim Population in Excess of One Million, with Regional Totals



Source: Table III.

Note: The regional totals also include countries with Muslim populations greater than 10%.

TABLE II
Muslim Population in G7 Countries

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[*]	Democracy Score[†]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate
Canada	32.2	0.9%	2.0%	0.6	Confederation with parliamentary democracy	10	$29,300	3.3%
France	60.2	0.4%	5-10%	6.0	Republic	9	$26,000	1.2%
United Kingdom	60.1	0.3%	2.5%	1.5	Constitutional monarchy	10	$25,500	1.8%
United States	290.3	0.9%	1.7% — 2.7%	4.9	Federal republic	10	$36,300	2.4%
Japan	127.2	0.1%	Negligible	0.0	Constitutional monarchy	10	$28,700	0.2%
Italy	58.0	0.1%	1.7% and growing	1.0	Republic	10	$25,100	0.4%
Germany	82.4	0.04%	3.7%	3.0	Federal Republic	10	$26,200	0.2%

Sources: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, 2003 and United States Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report*, 2003.

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[*] As described in the CIA *World Factbook*, 2003.

[†] The "Democracy Score" is taken from the United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report 2002*. The democracy score — called the "polity score" in Table A1.1 of the report, reflects the presence of institutional factors necessary for democracy. Scores range for –10 (authoritarian) to 10 (democratic).

TABLE III

Countries with a Muslim Population Greater than 10 Percent or in Excess of One Million

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Afghanistan	28.7	3.4%	84% Sunni, 15% Shi'a	28.4	Islamic republic	N/A	$700	N/A
Albania	3.6	1.0%	52% Sunni and 18% Bektashi (a liberal form of Shi'a Sufism)	2.5	Emerging democracy	5	$4,400	7.3%
Algeria	32.8	1.6%	99% Sunni	32.5	Republic	-3	$5,400	3.3%
Azerbaijan	7.8	0.4%	93% – predominantly Shi'a	7.3	Republic	-7	$3,700	10.6%
Bahrain	0.7	1.6%	70% Shi'a, 30% Sunni	0.7	Constitutional monarchy	-9	$15,100	2.9%
Bangladesh	138.4	2.1%	83% – predominantly Sunni	114.9	Parliamentary democracy	6	$1,800	4.8%
Benin	7.0	3.0%	20% – predominantly Sunni	1.4	Republic under multiparty democratic rule	6	$1,100	6.0%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4.0	0.5%	40% – predominantly Sunni	1.6	Emerging federal democratic republic	N/A	$1,900	2.3%
Brunei	0.4	2.0%	67% – predominantly Sunni	0.2	Constitutional sultanate	N/A	$18,600	3.0%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Burkina Faso	13.2	2.6%	50% – predominantly Sunni	6.6	Parliamentary republic	-3	$1,100	4.6%
Burundi	6.1	2.2%	10% – predominantly Sunni	0.6	Republic	-1	$500	4.5%
Cameroon	15.7	2.0%	20% – predominantly Sunni	3.1	Republic with multiparty presidential regime	-4	$1,700	4.0%
Central African Republic	3.7	1.6%	15% – predominantly Sunni	0.6	Republic	6	$1,200	1.5%
Chad	9.2	3.1%	51% – predominantly Sufi	4.7	Republic	-2	$1,000	7.4%
China	1,287.0	0.6%	2% – predominantly Sunni	25.7	Communist state	-7	$4,700	8.0%
Comoros	0.6	3.0%	98% Sunni	0.6	Republic	-1	$700	2.0%
Cote d'Ivoire	17.0	2.2%	39% – predominantly Sunni	6.6	Republic with multiparty presidential regime	4	$1,400	-1.6%
Cyprus	0.8	0.6%	18% – predominantly Sunni; located in Turkish area	0.1	Republic	10	$15,000 (Greek area); $6,000 (Turkish area)	1.7% (Greek area); 2.6% (Turkish area)
Djibouti	0.5	2.1%	99% Sunni	0.5	Republic	2	$1,300	3.5%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Egypt	74.7	1.9%	94% – predominantly Sunni	70.2	Republic	-6	$4,000	3.2%
Eritrea	4.4	1.3%	50% Sunni	2.2	Transitional government	-6	$700	2.0%
Ethiopia	66.6	2.0%	45% – predominantly Sunni	30.0	Federal republic	1	$700	3.0%
France	60.2	0.4%	5-10%	6.0	Republic	9	$26,000	1.2%
Gabon	1.3	2.5%	12% – predominantly Sunni	0.2	Republic with multiparty presidential regime	-4	$6,500	0.2%
Gambia, The	1.5	3.0%	90% – predominantly Sunni	1.4	Republic under multiparty democratic rule	-5	$1,800	5.7%
Georgia	4.9	-0.5%	Up to 11% – mix of Sunni and Shi'a	0.5	Republic	5	$3,200	5.4%
Germany	82.4	0.04%	3.7%	3.0	Federal Republic	10	$26,200	0.2%
Ghana	20.5	1.4%	16% – predominantly Sunni	3.3	Constitutional democracy	2	$2,000	4.5%
Guinea	9.0	2.4%	85% – predominantly Sunni	7.7	Republic	-1	$2,100	3.7%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Guinea-Bissau	1.4	2.0%	45% – predominantly Sunni	0.6	Republic, multiparty	6	$700	-4.3%
Guyana	0.7	0.4%	15% – both Sunni and Shi'a	0.1	Republic	6	$3,800	1.1%
India	1,049.7	1.5%	12% – predominantly Sunni	126.0	Federal republic	9	$2,600	4.3%
Indonesia	234.9	1.5%	88% – predominantly Sunni	206.7	Republic	7	$3,100	3.7%
Iran	68.3	1.1%	89% Shi'a, 10% Sunni	67.6	Theocratic republic	3	$6,800	7.6%
Iraq	24.7	2.8%	60%-65% Shi'a, 32%-37% Sunni	23.9	Transitional	N/A	$2,400	-3.0%
Israel	6.1	1.4%	15% – predominantly Sunni	0.9	Parliamentary democracy	10	$19,500	-0.8%
Jordan	5.5	2.8%	94% – predominantly Sunni	5.1	Constitutional monarchy	-2	$4,300	4.9%
Kazakhstan	16.8	0.2%	47% – predominantly Sunni	7.9	Republic	-4	$7,200	9.5%
Kenya	31.6	1.3%	10%-20% – predominantly Sunni	6.3	Republic	-2	$1,100	1.1%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Kuwait	2.2	3.3%	70% Sunni, 30% Shi'a	2.2	Nominal constitutional monarchy	-7	$17,500	-2.0%
Kyrgyzstan	4.9	1.5%	80% – predominantly Sunni	3.9	Republic	-3	$2,900	5.3%
Lebanon	3.7	1.3%	70% – mix of various Shi'a orders and Sunni	2.6	Republic	N/A	$4,800	2.0%
Liberia	3.3	1.7%	20% – predominantly Sunni	0.7	Republic	N/A	$1,000	2.0%
Libya	5.5	2.4%	97% Sunni	5.3	Military dictatorship	-7	$6,200	1.2%
Macedonia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of	2.1	0.4%	30% – predominantly Sunni; some Bektashi (a liberal form of Shi'a Sufism)	0.6	Parliamentary democracy	6	$5,100	0.7%
Madagascar	17.0	3.0%	Slightly less than 10% – mix of Sunni and Shi'a	1.7	Republic	7	$800	-11.9%
Malawi	11.6	2.2%	20% – predominantly Sunni	2.3	Multiparty democracy	7	$600	1.7%
Malaysia	23.1	1.9%	60% – predominantly Sunni	13.9	Constitutional monarchy	3	$8,800	4.1%
Maldives	0.3	2.9%	100% Sunni	0.3	Republic	N/A	$3,900	2.3%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Mali	11.6	2.9%	90% – predominantly Sunni	10.5	Republic	6	$900	4.5%
Mauritania	2.9	2.9%	100% Sunni	2.9	Republic	-6	$1,700	3.3%
Mauritius	1.2	0.8%	16% – predominantly Sunni	0.2	Parliamentary democracy	10	$10,100	2.3%
Morocco	31.7	1.6%	99% Sunni	31.4	Constitutional monarchy	-6	$3,900	4.6%
Mozambique	17.5	0.8%	20% – predominantly Sunni	3.5	Republic	6	$1,100	7.7%
Niger	11.1	2.7%	90% – predominantly Sunni	10.0	Republic	4	$800	2.9%
Nigeria	133.9	2.5%	50% – predominantly Sunni	66.9	Republic	4	$900	3.2%
Oman	2.8	3.4%	75% Ibadhi, 25% predominantly Sunni	2.8	Monarchy	-9	$8,300	2.2%
Pakistan	150.7	2.0%	77% Sunni, 20% Shi'a	146.2	Federal Republic	-6	$2,000	4.4%
Philippines	84.6	1.9%	5%, possibly as high as 12% – predominantly Sunni	10.2	Republic	8	$4,600	4.4%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government‡	Democracy Score§	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Qatar	0.8	2.9%	95%—predominantly Sunni	0.8	Traditional monarchy	-10	$20,100	4.6%
Russian Federation	144.5	-0.3%	14%—predominantly Sunni	20.2	Federation	7	$9,700	4.3%
Saudi Arabia	24.3	3.3%	100% – predominantly Sunni	24.3	Monarchy	-10	$11,400	1.0%
Senegal	10.6	2.6%	94% – predominantly Sunni	9.9	Republic under multiparty democratic rule	8	$1,500	2.4%
Sierra Leone	5.7	2.9%	60% – predominantly Sunni	3.4	Constitutional democracy	N/A	$500	6.6%
Singapore	4.6	3.4%	15% – predominantly Sunni	0.7	Parliamentary republic	-2	$25,200	2.2%
Somalia	8.0	3.4%	99% – predominantly Sunni	7.9	Transitional	N/A	$600	3.5%
Sudan	38.1	2.7%	65-75% – predominantly Sunni	28.6	Authoritarian regime	-7	$1,400	5.1%
Suriname	0.4	0.4%	20% – mix of Sunni, Shi'a, and Amadhiyya	0.1	Constitutional democracy	N/A	$3,400	1.2%
Syria	17.6	2.4%	74% Sunni, 16% other Muslim groups	15.8	Republic under military regime	-7	$3,700	3.6%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
Tajikistan	6.9	2.1%	95% — predominantly Sunni	6.5	Republic	-1	$1,300	9.1%
Tanzania	35.9	1.7%	30-40% — predominantly Sunni	14.4	Republic	2	$600	6.1%
Thailand	64.3	1.0%	Up to 10% — predominantly Sunni	6.4	Constitutional monarchy	9	$7,000	5.3%
Togo	5.4	2.4%	14% Sunni	0.8	Republic under transition to multiparty democratic rule	-2	$1,400	2.9%
Tunisia	9.9	1.1%	98% — predominantly Sunni	9.7	Republic	-3	$6,800	4.8%
Turkey	68.1	1.2%	99%— predominantly Sunni	67.4	Republican parliamentary democracy	7	$7,300	7.8%
Turkmenistan	4.8	1.8%	89% — predominantly Sunni	4.3	Republic	-9	$6,700	21.1%
Uganda	25.6	3.0%	16%— predominantly Sunni	4.1	Republic	-4	$1,200	5.5%
United Arab Emirates	2.5	1.6%	85% Sunni, 15% Shi'a	2.5	Federation of seven emirates	-8	$22,100	1.8%
United Kingdom	60.1	0.3%	2.5%	1.5	Constitutional monarchy	10	$25,500	1.8%

Country	Population (millions) (2003 est.)	Population Growth Rate	Percent Muslim	Muslim Population (millions)	Government[‡]	Democracy Score[§]	GDP per capita ($U.S.) (2002 est.)	GDP Growth Rate (2002)
United States	290.3	0.9%	1.7% — 2.7%	4.9	Federal republic	10	$36,300	2.4%
Uzbekistan	26.0	1.6%	88% — predominantly Sunni	22.9	Republic with authoritarian presidential rule	-9	$2,600	4.2%
West Bank and Gaza Strip	3.5	3.6%	98% – predominantly Sunni	3.4	Transitional	N/A	$750	-20%
Western Sahara	0.3	N/A	99% Sunni	0.3	Under Moroccan control	N/A	N/A	N/A
Yemen	19.3	3.4%	70% Sunni, 30% Shi'a	19.3	Republic	-2	$800	4.1%

Sources: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, 2003 and United States Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report*, 2003.

[‡] As described in the CIA *World Factbook*, 2003.

[§] The "Democracy Score" is taken from the United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report 2002*. The democracy score — called the "polity score" in Table A1.1 of the report, reflects the presence of institutional factors necessary for democracy. Scores range for –10 (authoritarian) to 10 (democratic).

APPENDIX II
LIST OF WITNESSES

Associations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
37TH PARLIAMENT 2ND SESSION		
University of British Columbia Andrew Mack, Director, Human Security Centre	10/04/2003	31
University of Western Ontario Salim Mansur, Professor of Political Science		
As Individual Reid Morden, President, Reid Morden and Associates		
Canadian Islamic Congress Wahida Valiante, National Vice-President and Vice-Chair of the Board	06/05/2003	34
Carleton University John Sigler, Adjunct Professor of Political Science		
Royal Military College of Canada Houchang Hassan-Yari, Professor and Head, Political and Economic Science		
University of Alberta Saleem Qureshi, Professor Emeritus of Political Science		
Aga Khan Foundation of Canada Nazeer Aziz Ladhani, Chief Executive Officer	07/05/2003	35
McGill University A. Uner Turgay, Director, Institute of Islamic Studies		
National Council on Canada Arab Relations Mazen Chouaib, Executive Director		
Carleton University Farhang Rajaee, Professor of Political Science and Humanities	23/09/2003	45
York University David Dewitt, Professor of Political Science, Director, Centre for International and Security Studies		
As an Individual M. J. Akbar, Indian Journalist and Author		

Associations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
McGill University	30/09/2003	47
A. Uner Turgay, Director, Institute of Islamic Studies		
University of Calgary		
Tareq Y. Ismael, Professor of Political Science		
Senate		
Honourable. Mobina Jaffer, Senator		
The Arab League	01/10/2003	48
Amre Moussa, Secretary General		
Houssein Hassouna, Chief Representative to the United States		
Carleton University	02/10/2003	49
Karim H. Karim, Professor of Journalism and Communication		
South Asia Partnership Canada		
Ann Thomson, President of the Board		
"Université de Sherbrooke"		
Sami Aoun, Professor of Political Science		
University of Toronto, Munk Centre For International Studies		
Michael Bell, Senior Fellow on Diplomacy		
Canadian International Development Agency	07/10/2003	50
Paul Hunt, Vice-President, Africa and Middle East Branch		
Hau Sing Tse, Vice-President, Asia Branch		
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade	09/10/2003	51
Mark Bailey, Director General, Middle East and North Africa Bureau		
Don Bobiash, Director, Southeast Asia Division		
Arif Lalani, Director, South Asia Division		
John McNee, Assistant Deputy Minister, Africa and Middle East		
Marta Moszczenska, Director, Baltic, Central European and Eastern Mediterranean Countries Division		
David Mulroney, Assistant Deputy Minister, Asia-Pacific		
University of Ankara (Turkey)	28/10/2003	52
Osman Tastan, Professor of Islamic Law		
Canadian Arab Federation	30/10/2003	53
Raja Khouri, National President		
Council on American-Islamic Relations-Canada		
Sheema Khan, Chair		

Associations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)	05/11/2003	56
Peter Hansen, Commissioner General		
Maher Nasser, Chief, Liaison Office (New-York)		
New York University	06/11/2003	58
Noah Feldman, Professor of Law		

37TH PARLIAMENT 3RD SESSION

Associations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development	25/02/2004	3
Jean-Louis Roy, President		
Lloyd Lipsett, Senior Assistant to the President		
Iris Almeida, Director of Policy, Programmes and Planning		

LIST OF INDIVIDUALS WHO MET WITH THE COMMITTEE DURING TRAVEL

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (NEW YORK)

May 8, 2003

Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

Paul Heinbecker, Permanent Representative and Ambassador
Gilbert Laurin, Deputy Permanent Representative
Glyn Berry, Minister-Counsellor
Debra Price, Counsellor
Beatrice Maille, Second Secretary
Charissa McIntosh, Attaché

Residence of Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Canada to the United Nations

Aysa Heinbecker
Kishore Mahbubani, Permanent Representative of Sinapore
Fawzi Bin Abdul Majeed Shobokshi, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia
Mohamed Bennouna, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco
Rastam Mohd. Isa, Permanent Representative of Malaysia
Mohammad Hassan Fadaifard, Deputy Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of Iran
Mokhtar Lamani, permanent Observer for the Organziation of the Islamic Conference
David Malone, President, International Peace Academy

May 9, 2003

Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

Richard Bulliet, Professor of History, Columbia University
Isobel Coleman, Senior Fellow, United States Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations
Moez Doraid, Regional Programme Advisor, Regional Bureau for Arab States, United Nations Development Programme
Rima Khalaf Hunaidi, Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations, Director, Regional Bureau of Arab States, United Nations Development Programme
Henry Siegman, Senior Fellow and Director, United States Middle East Project, Council on Foreign Relations
Mustapha Tlili, Senior Fellow and Program Director, World Policy Institute, New School University
Neguin Yavari, Professor of Religion, Columbia University

United Nations Headquarters

Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General

MOROCCO (RABAT AND CASABLANCA)

Embassy of Canada

Yves Gagnon, Ambassador
Marianick Tremblay, First Secretary and Vice-Consul
Ghislaine Mansouri, General and Political Affairs

May 10, 2003 **Meetings in Rabat**

Lahcen Daoudi, Member of the House of Representatives, Member of the Secretariat-General, Islamist Justice and Development Party
Hassan Maaouni, 2nd Vice-President of the House of Representatives
Mohammed-Allal Sinaceur, Advisor to the King
Fahd Regragui, Academic, Member of Forum 21's Committee on Political and Strategic Studies

May 11, 2003 **Meetings in Casablanca**

Mohammed Tozy, Academic, Expert on Muslim Society
Khalid Seffiani, Lawyer and Member of the Committee of Support to Iraq
Fatima Moustaghfi, Lawyer, Member of the House of Representatives (National Popular Movement)
Khalid Naciri, Academic, Expert on the Evolution of Moroccan Society
Abdelmalek Kettani, Entrepreneur, Deputy Chair of the Association "Alternatives for Change and Development"

UNITED KINGDOM (LONDON)

May 12, 2003 **Canadian High Commission**

Robert Rochon, Deputy High Commissioner
Alan Kessel, Minister, Political/Public Affairs
Dennis Horak, Counsellor, Political
Matthew Deutscher, Third Secretary

May 13, 2003 **Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Commons**

Rt. Hon. Donald Anderson, M.P., Chair
Sir Patrick Cormack, M.P.
Bill Olner, M.P.

Canadian High Commission

Raficq Abdullah, Secretary, Kingston University
Karen Armstrong, Author and Broadcaster on Religious Affairs
Faris Badawi, Secretary, Muslim College
M.A. Zaki Badawi, Principal, Muslim College, London
Bavna Dave, Lecturer, Political Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Gwynne Dyer, Journalist and Historian
William Hale, Professor, Political Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
Ssamar Mashadi, Director of Projects, Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR)

FRANCE (PARIS)

Embassy of Canada

Ian McLean, Minister
Marc Berthiaume, Political Attaché
Julie Normand, Political Section

May 14, 2003

Canadian Cultural Centre

Antoine Basbous, Director, "Observatoire des pays Arabes"
Roland Blum, Member, Vice-Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs, National Assembly
Dalil Boubaker, Chair, "Conseil français de culte Mulsulman" and Rector, "Grande Mosquée de Paris"
Christophe Farnaud, Advisor, North Africa and Middle East, Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Elyete Lévy-Heisbourg, Counsellor, Committee on Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly
Yann Richard, Director, Institute of Iranian Studies, "Université Sorbonne nouvelle Paris III"
Vianney Sevaistre, Technical Advisor, Office of the Minister of Interior and Head of the "Bureau central des cultes"
Antoine Sfeir, Director of "Cahiers de l'Orient"
Azadeh Kian-Thiebaut, Professor of Political Science, "Université Sorbonne nouvelle Paris III"

Arab World Institute

Denis Bauchard, Chair and Former Ambassador to Canada

INDONESIA (JAKARTA)

Embassy of Canada

Randolph Mank, Ambassador
Julian Murray, Counsellor (Development)
Jim Nickel, Counsellor, Political and Public Affairs
Colonel P. Crandell, Defence Attaché
J.C. Gosselin, Counsellor, Immigration
Jennifer Hart, Second Secretary
Nicolas Lepage, Third Secretary (Commercial)

October 15, 2003

Parliamentarians and Non-Government Representatives

H.A. Syafi'i Ma'arif, Chair, *Muhammadiyah*
Ali Alatas, Former Foreign Minister
Sidney Jones, Southeast Asia Director, International Crisis Group
Ibrahim Ambong, Chair Committee 1, Indonesian Parliament
Clara Joewono, Deputy Director, Centre for Strategic and International Studies

October 16, 2003

Pak Tarmizi Taher, Former Minister, Religious Affairs

Committee 1, Indonesian Parliament

Ibrahim Ambong, Chair
Ahmad Sumargono, Vice-President, Crescent Star Party
Prasetya, Member

Universitas Islam Negeri (State Islamic University)

Fu'ad Jabali
Dina Afrianty
Chaider Bamyualim
Ifran Abukar
Amsal Bachtiar

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)

Rozy Munir, Chair of the Board
Maria Ulfa, Chair of Fatayat NU

Pesantren Asshiddiqiah Kedoya

KH Nur Muhammad Iskandar, Principal

October 17, 2003 **Council of Ulamas (Mesjid Istiqlal Mosque)**

H. Umar Shihab, Chair
Nazri Adlani, Member
H. Amidan, Member
Zakiah Darajat, Professor

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dino Djalal, Director, North America and Mexico Division

Ministry of Religious Affairs

Faisal Ismail, Secretary General
H.M. Atho Mudzhar, Head of Research, Development and Religious Affairs
H. Ahmad Qodri A. Azizi, Director General of Islamic Agencies
P. Siahaan Sth, Director General, Christian Committee Counselling
Stef Agus, Director General, Catholic Committee Counselling
I Wayan Suarjaya Msi, Director General, Hindu and Buddhist Committee Counselling

TURKEY (ANKARA)

Embassy of Canada

Michael Leir, Ambassador
Martial Pagé, Counsellor (Political)
Giles Norman, Second Secretary
Jeannette Menzies, Third Secretary
Jennifer Barbarie, Counsellor (Commercial)
Simin Taylaner, Attaché
Ozge Coskun, Interpreter

October 17, 2003 **Journalists and Academics**

Rusen Cakir, Journalist, *Vatan*
Mustafa Karaalioglu, Ankara Bureau Chief, *Yeni Safak*
Baskin Oran, Professor, International Relations, Ankara University
Ahmet Yasar Ocak, Professor of History, Haceteppe University
Hadi Adanali, Professor of Divinity, Ankara University

Parliamentarians (Residence of the Canadian Ambassador)

- Mehmet Dulger, M.P., Chair, Foreign Relations Committee
- Erol Aslan Cebeci, M.P.
- Afif Demirkiran, M.P.
- Kemal Dervis, M.P,.Former Minister of the Economy
- Sukru Elekdag, M.P., Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Turkish Ambassador to United States
- Gaye Erbatur, M.P.
- Osman Ulukan, Advisor to the Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee

October 18, 2003 **Non-Governement Organizations**

- Sema Kendirci, President, Turkish Women's Union
- Fatma Botsan Unsal, Former President, Capital City Women's Platform
- Yilmaz Ensaroglu, President, Mazlum – Der Human Rights Association

MALAYSIA (KUALA LUMPUR)

Canadian High Commission

- Melvyn MacDonald, High Commissioner
- Rachael Bedlington, First Secretary (Political)
- Douglas Holland, Acting Senior Trade Commissioner
- Michael Blackmore, Second Secretary (Political)

October 18, 2003 **Academic and Non-Government Representatives**

- Muddathir Abdel-Rahim, Professor of Political Science and Islamic Studies, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization
- Tuan Haji Azizuddin bin Ahmad, Secretary General, Muslim Youth Movement
- En. Zaidi Abdul Aziz, Assistant Secretary General; Muslim Youth Movement
- Bunn Nagara, Associate Editor, *The Star*
- Balan Moses, Editor, *New Straits Time*
- Syed Serajul Islam, Professor of Political Science, Lakehead University
- James Wong, Chief Analyst, Strategic Analysis Malaysia
- Ong Kian Ming, Policy Analyst, Socio-Economic Development and Research Institute
- Teresa Kok Suh Sim, Member of Parliament (Democratic Action Party)
- Che Zainah Anwar, Executive Director, Sisters in Islam
- Che Masjaliza Hamzah, Program Director, Sisters in Islam

Institute of Strategic and International Studies

- Tan Sri Dato' Noordin Sopiee, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
- Dato' Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, Director General
- Stephen Liong, Assistant Director General
- Phillip Matthews, Assistant Director General

October 20, 2003 **International Movement for a Just World (JUST)**

- Chandra Muzaffar, President

Ministry of Women and Family Development

- Y.B. Dato' Seri Shahrizat binti Abdul Jalil, Minister of Women and Family Development

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN (AMMAN)

Embassy of Canada
John T. Holmes, Ambassador
Mark Glauser, First Secretary
Monika Vadeboncoeur, First Secretary (Cooperation)

October 19, 2003 **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
Shaher Bak, Minister of State, Foreign Affairs

Parliament (House of Representatives)
S'ad Hayel Srour, Speaker
Mohammed Abu Hdeib, Chair, Committee on Arab and International Relations

Residence
Marwan Kasem, Former Prime Minister and Former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Residence of Mrs. Zaid Subailat
Michel Marto, Minister of Finance

October 20, 2003 **Journalists and Non-Government Representatives**
Oraib Al-Rantawi, Al Quds Centre for Political Studies
Amal Sabbagh, Secretary General, Jordan's National Commission for Women
Mouin Rabbani, Senior Analyst, International Crisis Group
Randa Habib, Amman Bureau Chief, Agence France Presse
Jennifer Haranneh, Acting Editor in Chief, *Jordan Times*
Yaser Abu Hilaleh, Correspondent, *Al Jazeera*
Samih Maayteb, Correspondent, *Arab Il Youm*
Osama El-Sherif, Editor in Chief, *Il Dustour*
Francesca Sawelha, Chief Reporter, *Jordan Times*
Mahseh, Journalist, *Arab Il Yom*
Asam Salfiti, Chair, Union Bank
Younis Qawasmi, General Manager, United Arab Investors

Residence of the Canadian Ambassador
Taher Masri, Former Prime Minister
Abdullah Ensour, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Former Foreign Minister
Nabil Sharif, Minister of Information
Rana Sabbah, Independent Journalist

October 23, 2003 **Royal Palace**
His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan Bin Talal

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN (TEHRAN)

Embassy of Canada
Philip MacKinnon, Ambassador
Mary MacKinnon
John Davison, Counsellor (Political)
Timothy Bowman, First Secretary (Immigration)
Eric Laporte, Second Secretary (Political)
Ali Mir, Second Secretary (Commercial)
Jean-Marc Archambault, Attaché (Administration and Consular Affairs)

October 19, 2003

Committee on National Security and Foreign Relations of the Majlis (Parliament)

Mohsen Mirdamadi, Chair
Mohsen Armin, Vice-Speaker, Majlis
Reza Youssefian, Member
Kazem Jalali, Member
Hassan Ghashghavi, Member

Islamic Human Rights Commission

Ayatollah Seyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, High Commissioner
Mohammad Hassan Ziaiefar, Secretary General

October 20, 2003

Minority Members of the Majlis

Yunaten Bedkolia, Assyrian Minority Group
Khosrow Dabestani, Zoroastrian Minority Group
Leon Davidian, Armenian (North of Iran) Minority Group

Women Members of the Majlis

Hamideh Edalat, Head, Women's Faction
Jamileh Kadivar, Secretary General, Association of Iranian Women Journalists
Elaheh Koolaee, Member, Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy

Institute for Political and International Affairs

Seyed Kazem Sajjadpour, Director General
Seyed Rassoul Mousavi, Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Former Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan and India
Hamad Sadegui, Deputy Director
Homayoun Amir Khalili, International Relations Expert, Former Iranian Ambassador to Bosnia
Mojtaba Ferdowsipour, Director, Centre for the Persian Gulf and the Middle East
Ziba Tarzin Nia, Director, Publications Centre
Mohammad Ali Emami, Persian Gulf Expert
Zahra Taheri Amin, Expert on China Iran Relations
Nasrine Dokht Nousrat, Economist
Mahmoud Zandi, Canada Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Reza Youssefian, Member of the Majlis and Member, Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy
Mohammad Javad Tayefi, International Relations Expert, Majlis
Esmail Khorshidi, Protocol Officer, Majlis

Ministry of the Environment

Massoumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President, Islamic Republic of Iran and Minister, Environment
Tueel Motosaddi Laxandi, Director General

INDIA (NEW DELHI)

Canadian High Commission
Lucie Edwards, High Commissioner
Brian Dickson, Deputy High Commissioner
Dominique Collinge, Counsellor (Immigration)
Denis Chouinard, Counsellor (Political/Economic)
James Carrick, First Secretary (Political)
Madhusri Das, Senior Political and Economic Analyst
Marie-Louise Hannan, Temporary Duty Officer

October 21, 2003 **Academic and Cultural Representatives**
Prof. Mushirul Hasan, Jamia Millia Islamia University
Prof Zoya Hassan, Jawaharlal Nehru University
Moosa Raza, Indian Islamic Cultural Centre
Abad Ahmad, Delhi University and Chair, Aga Khan Foundation, India

Islamic Centre
Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, President
Priya Mallik, Manager, Investment Banking, American Express
Farida Khanam, Senior Lecturer, Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University
Rajat Malhotra, Manager, Mutual Funds, Housing Development Finance Corporation
Khalid Ansari, Principal Correspondent, *Hindustan Times*
Stuti Malhotra, Manager, Accounts, Image India, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Journalists
Syed Shahabuddin, Editor, *Mushawrat*, President, Majlis-e-Mushawrat
Saeed Naqvi, Editor, *World Report*

October 22, 2003 **Aga Khan Foundation, India**
Abad Ahmad, Chair, Aga Khan Foundation, India
Nasser Munjee, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure Development Finance Co.
Naushad I. Padamsee, Chair, Development Credit Bank
Mr. Dharani, Vice-President, Ismaili Council

Indian Parliament
Krishna Bose, Chair, Standing Committee on External Affairs, Lok Sabha (Lower House)

Journalists
Neerja Chowdhury, Columnist, *The Indian Express*
Zafarul-Islam Khan, Editor, *Milli Gazette*
Shahid Siddiqui, Member, Lok Sabba, Editor, *Nai Duniya*
Mehendra Ved, Deputy Bureau Chief, *The Times of India*
Ram Madhav, Spokesperson, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

Ministry of External Affairs
Arun K. Singh, Joint Secretary (Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan)

KINGDOM OF SAUDIA ARABIA (JEDDAH AND RIYADH)

Embassy of Canada

Roderick Bell, Ambassador

Yves Duval, Second Secretary, Political, Economic and Public Affairs

Emily King, Third Secretary, Political, Economic and Public Affairs

René Francis Désomoré, Minister Counsellor, Trade and Commercial

Riyad Awaidah, Interpreter, Political, Economic and Public Affairs

October 21, 2003 **Organization of Islamic Conference, Jeddah**

Ambassador Ezzat Mufti, Assistant Secretary General and Senior Adviser, Political Affairs

Ambassador Sa'addudin Al Tayeb, Senior Adviser to the Secretary General

Atta Al Mannan, Director, Political Affairs

Mohamed Benabdeljalil, Director, Political Affairs

Zamel Saeedi, Director, Asian and Balkans, Political Affairs

Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Women Members)

Fatin Bandaggi, Deputy Secretary General, Founder and Director, Saudi Businesswomen Centre

Nashwah Taher, Business Executive

Wahi Lougman, Professor of Law

Nahed Taher, Economist

Jawharah Al Angari, Senior Philanthropist

Maha Fitaihi, Free Lance Social Worker

Maria Arena, Communications Consultant

Samar Fatany, Radio Journalist

Residence of the Honorary Consul General of Canada, Jeddah

Sheikh Mohammed Attar, Honorary Consul

Ghassan Ahmed Al Sulaiman, Chair of Ikea, Vice-President, Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Hussein Shobokshi, Columnist, *Arab News*

Amr M. Khashoggi, Chair and CEO, Amkest Group

Osama El Khereiji, Certified Public Accountant, Polaris International

Ghazi Binzager, Business Executive

Hani Saab, Director General, Electromechanical and Technical Associates

Talal Zahid, Business Executive

Human I. Jabban, International Building Systems

Fahed A. Almugairin, Chair, Saudi Masar, High Tech and Marketing Company

October 22, 2003 **Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Islamic Affairs of the Majlis Ash Shura (Advisory Council)**

Sheikh Salih Abdullah Bin Hemaid, Chair

Abdullah Bin Saleh Al-Obeid, Former Secretary General, Islamic World League

Saleh Al Malik

Abdul Mushin Al Akkas

Usama Al Kurdi

Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Ibrahim Al-Faiz

Assad S. Abduh

Mohammad Al Ghamdi

Basheer Al Ghorayed

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

His Royal Highness Prince Saud Al-Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Residence of the Canadian Ambassador

Hamid Bin Ahmad Al-Rifaie, President, International Islamic Forum for Dialogue and Assistant Secretary General, World Muslim Congress

H.E. Mohamed Rajaa Husseini, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Canada

October 23, 2003 **Academic Representatives**

Khalil A- Khalil, Professor of Education, Leadership, Minorities, Islamic Trends, Iman Muhammed Bin Saud Islamic University

Mishary Al-Muairi, Professor, Mass Communications, King Saud University

Abdullah Al Askar, Professor of History, King Saud University

Ibrahim A. Al Beayeyz, Professor of Mass Communications, King Saud University

Abdullah Alhomaid, Professor, King Saud University

WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP (RAMALLAH)

Representative Office of Canada

Steve Hibbard, Representative

Wayne Primeau, Deputy Representative

Richard Colvin, Head, Political Section

Alistair Wallbaum, Political Officer

October 21, 2003 **Applied Research Institute, Jerusalem**

Jad Isaac, Director

Temporary International Presence, Hebron

Roar Bakke Sorensen, Senior Press and Information Officer

October 23, 2003 **Meetings in Ramallah**

Nabil Amr, Former Minister of Information, Palestinian National Authority

Marwan Kanafani, Chair, Politcal Committee, Palestinian Legislative Council

Kabil Kassis, Former Minister of Planning, Palestinian National Authority

Ali Jarbawi, Secretary General, Election Commission

Ri'ad Malki, Director General, Panorama, The Palestinian Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development

Nabil Khatib, Director, Birzeit University Media Institute, Bureau Chief, Middle East Broadcasting Center

Wafr Amr, Reuters News Agency

Hisham Abdullah, *Agence France Presse*

ISRAEL (TEL AVIV)

Embassy of Canada

Donald Sinclair, Ambassador

Henry Kolatacz, Minister Counsellor

Michael Elliott, Second Secretary

October 22, 2003 **Jerusalem Centre of Public Affairs**

Dore Gold, Director

Knesset (Parliament) Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee

Yuval Shteinitz, Chair, Likud Party
Eti Livni, Member, Shinui Party
Dani Yatom, Member, Labour Party
Majalli Whbee, Member, Likud Party
Ahman Tibi, Member, Hadash Party

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Centre for Political Research

Yoram Ben Zeev, Deputy Director General for North America
Harry Kney Tal, Director, Centre for Political Research
Haim Koren, Director, Middle East Department 1
Daniel Kat Ner, Director, Middle East Department 2
Yair Even, Director, Middle East Department 4
Lironne Bar Sadeh, Director, Strategic and Economic Affairs
Chen Ivri, Director, Documentation Management Department

Meetings in Jerusalem

Avraham Sela, Chair, International Relations Department, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Mohammed Zeidan, Coordinator, Arab Association for Human Rights
Lily Galili, Journalist, *Ha'aretz*
Baruch Speigel, Consultant, Economic Cooperation Foundation

PAKISTAN (ISLAMABAD)

Canadian High Commission

Margaret Huber, High Commissioner
Bryan Burton, Deputy High Commissioner
Aized Ali, Political Analyst

October 23, 2003 **Academic and Non-Government Representatives**

Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, President, Aga Khan University
Akbar Ali Pesnani, President, Ismaili Council for Pakistan
Zafarullah Khan, Program Coordinator, Friedrich Naumann Foundation
Sarwar Bari, National Coordinator, Pattan
Abid Zareef Khan, President, Zareef Khan Trust, Peshawar

National Assembly

Sardar Yusuf, Deputy Speaker
Nayyar Bokhari, Member, Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian
Fauzia Wahab, Member, Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian
Ahsan Iqbal, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)

United Nations Population Fund

Feryal Ali Gauhar, Goodwill Ambassador for the Pakistan Development Organization

October 24, 2003 **Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights**

Saira Kareem, Joint Secretary

Academic and Non-Government Organizations

Mahmood Ghazi, Vice-President (Academics), Islamabad Islamic University (International Islamic University), Faisal Mosque Campus
Prevaiz Iqbal Cheema, Chair, Islamabad Policy Research Institute
Nusrat Javed, Journalist, *The News*

Muttahida Majlis-I-Amal Coalition

Abdul Ghafar Aziz, Director of Foreign Affairs, Jamaat-e-Islami
Asif Luqman, Deputy Director of Foreign Affairs, Jamaat-e-Islami
Ghafoor Ahmed, Senator

Pakistan Muslim League (Unified)

Salim Saifullah Khan, Member National Assembly & Secretary-General
S.M. Zafar, Senator
Mushahid Hussain, Senator

EGYPT (CAIRO)

Embassy of Canada

Michel de Salaberry, Ambassador
François Larochelle, Counsellor (Political)
Rick McTaggart, Counsellor (Development)
Jean-Philippe Tachdjian, Second Secretary
Nevine Osman, Political and Economic Officer
Tarek Abdel Meguid, Commercial Officer
Bertrand Desjardins, Counsellor (Trade)

October 24, 2003 **Canada Egypt Business Council**

Motaz Wasel Rastan, Chair

Parliamentarians

Hossam Badrawi, Head of the Education Committee, People's Assembly
Mounir Fakhry Abdel-Nour, Head of the Opposition, People's Assembly
Mohamed Morsy El-Aiat, Independent Member of the People's Assembly

Official Residence of the Canadian Ambassador

Hala Mustafa, Head of the Political Department, *Al Ahram* Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, Editor in Chief, *Quarterly Democracy Review*
Osama Al-Ghazali Harb, Member of the Shura Council (Upper House), Editor in Chief, International Politics Journal and Secretary General, Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs

October 25, 2003 **Egyptian Council on Foreign Affairs**

Mahmoud El Said, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Americas
Mohammed Ibrahim Shaker, Vice-President
Wahib El Menyawi, Member
Mohammed Said El Banhawi, Member
Nabil Badr, Member
Hamdy Nada, Member and Former Ambassador to Canada
Adel El Safty, Member
Mona Makram Ebeid, Member
Anwar Abdel Malak, Member
Amin Shalaby, Executive Director

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ahmed Maher El Sayed, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Residence of the Canadian Ambassador

Iman Bibars, Regional Director, Middle East and North Africa, *Ashoka Centre* and Chair, Organization for the Development and Enhancement of Women

Abdel Moety Bayoumi, Member, People's Assembly, Former Professor, Islamic Studies, Al-Azhar University

Fahmy Howeidi, Columnist, *Al-Ahram*

Cherif Abdel-Meguid, Chairman, Islamic Telephone Company

Motaz Raslan, Chairman, Canada-Egypt Business Council

Diane Laflamme Millette, Nile TV

Bahgat Korany, Professor, Political Science, American University in Cairo

Darren Law, Manager, Conrad Hilton Hotel

Donna Kennedy-Glans, Director, Corporate Responsibility, Menas Associates

APPENDIX III
LIST OF BRIEFS

Elsadig Abunafeesa

Canada International Scientific Exchange Program

Canadian Arab Federation

Canadian Committee for Democracy in Iran

Canadian Islamic Congress

Syed Serajul Islam

Tareq Y Ismael

Honourable Mobina Jaffer, Senator

Karim H. Karim

Mohamed Khalidi

Zaraful-Islam Khan

Salim Mansur

Farhang Rajaee

“Rassemblement canadien pour le Liban”

John Sigler

A. Uner Turgay

Vigilance and Virtue Movement

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings (*2nd Session, Meeting Nos. 31, 34, 35, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 56 and 58; 3rd Session, Meeting Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 including this report*) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernard Patry, M.P.
Chair

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, March 25, 2004
(*Meeting No. 8*)

The Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade met *in camera* at 9:17 a.m. this day, in Room 701 La Promenade Building, the Chair, Bernard Patry, presiding.

Members of the Committee present: Stéphane Bergeron, Scott Brison, Stockwell Day, Art Eggleton, Francine Lalonde, Paul Harold Macklin, Alexa McDonough, Deepak Obhrai, Bernard Patry, Raymond Simard and Bryon Wilfert.

Other Member present: Joe Clark.

In attendance: *Library of Parliament*: Gerald Schmitz, Principal Analyst; James Lee, Analyst; Marcus Pistor, Analyst.

Witnesses: *Development and Peace*: Marthe Lapierre, Program Manager. *International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development*: Jean-Louis Roy, President. *International Center for Legal Resources*: Catherine Duhamel, Director. *Oxfam-Quebec*: Michel Verret, Director of Overseas Programs; Carlos Arancibia, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the Committee on Tuesday February 17, 2004, the Committee resumed its study on relations with countries of the Muslim World.

It was agreed, — That the report *Exploring Canada's Relations with Countries of the Muslim World*, be adopted as a report to the House and that the Chair or his designate present it to the House.

It was agreed, — That, 1500 English versions and 550 French versions of the report be printed.

It was agreed, — That, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee request that the Government table a comprehensive response to the report.

It was agreed, — That the Chair be authorized to make such grammatical and editorial changes as may be necessary without changing the substance of the report.

It was agreed, — That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(1)(*a*), the Committee authorize the printing of brief dissenting and/or supplementary opinions as appendices to this report immediately after the signature of the Chair, that the opinions be sent to the Clerk of the Committee by electronic mail in both official languages on/before 15:00 le 26 mars 2004.

It was agreed, — That the Clerk of the Committee make the necessary arrangements for a press conference after the tabling of the Committee's report to the House and that a news release be prepared and distributed.

At 9:48, the Committee proceeded to sit in public, Raymond Simard presiding.

The Committee proceeded to the consideration of matters related to Committee business.

The Committee resumed consideration of the motion of Stockwell Day, — That the Committee support the request of Members of the House representing all political parties to have suicide bombing directed at innocent civilians be declared a crime against humanity by the Parliament of Canada.

The debate continued.

By unanimous consent, it was agreed, — That the debate be now adjourned.

It was agreed, — That the Library of Parliament analysts prepare a background document on the subject matter of the motion of Stockwell Day.

At 10:01 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the Committee on March 11, 2004, the Committee commenced its study on the situation in Haiti, the Chair Bernard Patry presiding.

Marthe Lapierre, Jean-Louis Roy, Catherine Duhamel and Michel Verret made statements and with Carlos Arancibia answered questions.

At 11:36 a.m. Raymond Simard took the Chair.

At 11:38 a.m. Bernard Patry took the Chair.

At 11:59 a.m. the Committee adjourned to the call of the Chair.

Stephen Knowles
Clerk of the Committee